separate for me...

(A Study of Mission Motivation and Education at the Grassroots Level — The Local Sending Church)

By

Glover Shipp

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"Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (Acts 13:2 RSV)

Dedication

Dedicated to our Commander-in-Chief, Jesus Christ, who issued our marching orders and promised us the resources to fulfil them.

Acknowledgments

My heartfelt thanks to Brazil colleagues, David Ingram and Bill Sweeton, for reading this manuscript and offering valuable suggestions, to mission secretaries Jeanne Clark, Jacqueline Henderson and Marilyn Sweeton, for typing its various stages, and J.C. Choate, for his heartwarming acceptance and publishing of my literary efforts.

The Publisher's Statement

Some of the most inspiring portions of the scripture tells of the unfolding of God's plan for world evangelism and how this plan was carried out. Caught up in this was God's calling by the gospel of such men as Paul, Barnabas, and many others. Also, it is interesting to observe the methods that were used and the kind of results they got. But why did all of this happen? Simply because God commanded it and Christians believed it and obeyed it.

Today mission work is only a minor part of the work of the church. And sadly, many of those who are in the mission fields of the world are using self-defeating methods, while refusing to sit down and talk the matter over with those whose methods are more conducive to church growth.

As a result of so little mission work being done, and such poor methods being used, the church has suffered greatly in our times. There has been a sharp decline in church growth. Many Christians and congregations are hurting because of attitudes of liberalism, internal differences, selfishness, and a lack of concern for others.

All of this is to say that we need a new awakening, a new concern, and a new commitment to God's pattern of doing things. Actually, we need to repent of our sins and failure for not having carried out the great commission in our times, and thus having denied salvation to millions, while denying many nations the leavening power of God's righteousness. We need to return to the old paths, the old methods of work. If we would do that, surely God would again reward our labors and give us victory over the world.

Bro. Glover Shipp, in this volume, attempts to call us back to God's way for his people. He deals with some of the basics that can assure success.

This makes the fourth book on mission work that I have printed by Bro. Shipp. As usual, he has done a good job. Being

a missionary himself in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, he is not just giving theory but he is speaking out of experience as one who practices what he preaches. Please read his book and encourage others to do the same. If enough will do this, things will begin to change for the better.

J.C. Choate
Singapore
October 1, 1985

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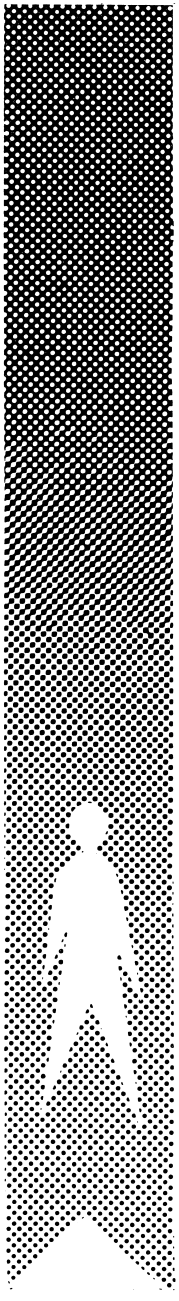

Part I
HOW AND WHY OF THIS BOOK?

"Our hope is ... that, as your faith grows, we may attain a position among you greater than ever before ... Then we can carry the Gospel to lands that lie beyond you ... " (II Corinthians 10:15–16 NEB).

A Personal Word

During the past twenty-five years, I have been moved to research and write on the subject of missions. I suppose that this is a natural response to a lifetime of contact with missions and missionaries. As a youngster, I was given opportunities to meet missionarires home on leave and to hear firsthand of their work. My father, C. H. Shipp, was engaged for many years in establishing congregations up and down the West Coast of the United States (later serving in mission work in Hawaii and Brazil), and was an outspoken advocate of the missionary endeavor. It could be said of him that he had a fire in his bones in the spirit of Jeremiah, 20:9, because he sought ever to enlarge the borders of the Kingdom, many times alone with the Lord, unsupported by his brethren.

In college, I came into contact with such men as Frank Pack, Harold Paden, Carl Mitchell, Mel Pownell, Otis Gatewood, J. M. McCaleb (forcibly retired and expelled by the Japanese government at the beginning of World War II, after fifty years of service in that country), and others who enlarged my view of the world and of the church. Later, working as an illustrator and journalist for a church publishing company, I was given the difficult but mind-enlarging task of researching mission fields of the 1940s and 1950s. From that point on, a course was set, unknown to me, that resulted in our family's eventual move to another land for the cause of Christ. Along the way, this course was reinforced by my serving as mission writer and then assistant editor of the *Christian Chronicle,* in its Abilene, Texas days. Later, as coordinator of Public Relations at Pepperdine University, I was able to meet a number of missionaries, to travel as far afield as Gautemala City, for the first annual Pan American Lectures in 1963, and to participate in early Mission Workshops at Michigan Christian College, Abilene Christian College and Harding College, all of these being decisive factors in my missionary development.

Then came the "point of no return", as we became committed in 1965 to mission service in Brazil, followed by a journey to the Pan American Lectures in Panama City and on to take a

look at our target city, Belo Horizonte, Brazil. This was followed by the 1966 Missions Seminar at Harding, under the direction of George Gurganus; sponsorship by our wonderful Richland Hills Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas; a Masters Degree emphasizing cross-cultural communication; and our departure for Brazil, in 1967. We have been on the field for fourteen years now. These years have been a bitter-sweet experience, as we continuted to serve, teach, build churches, edit an evangelistic magazine, tracts, courses and books in Portuguese, and write mission-oriented articles.

In recent years, several have asked me to collect my years of mission writing into books on motivation and methods, feeling that I am by now something of an expert. But, really, I am just another servant of the Lord, with a simple farm background, who has struggled with the Lord, with himself, and with others, and has made many mistakes, at time serious ones. The longer I work with a mission effort in another culture, the less I feel I know. At this rate, I may know nothing at all about missions in another ten years! Before that happens, perhaps I should set down some of the lessons I have had to absorb along the way.

But seriously, perhaps together, we can learn from the seed-thoughts in this book, probing some old and new aspects of mission principles, especially as they relate to the mission of the local church and the preparation of workers for other fields.

Glover Shipp
Caixa Postal 1514
Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Introduction

Books normally build their content on a foundation of basic assumptions. This work is no exception. Throughout, it assumes that there are those who take the Great Commission of Christ seriously, and others who are capable of growing to the point of receiving it and its full implications. Further, it assumes that most readers will accept the idea that the local church is a basic spiritual transformer, receiving power from Christ and transmitting it to those who do not know Him and His message. If the local church does not function as she should in this respect, the entire system is short-circuited.

The Original Method of Support

The original method of financing and supporting missions in the New Testament, according to references in Acts 13:1–2, Philippians 4:10–20 and II Corinthians 8: 1–5, is from the grassroots upwards; from the local church outward. Observe in these passages the idea of a voluntary partnership between the missionary and the local church, a purposeful setting apart of workers and funds for missions by individual congregations.

The Weakest Sub-Station

However, I realize full well, from my own experience and that of my other overseas workers for the Lord, that the local church can be the weakest sub-station in the Lord's missionary power system. Even more often than missionary failure seems to be the failure of congregations to place missions in an elevated and urgent position in their planning. Relatively few churches are wholeheartedly dedicated to fulfilling the mission to which Christ called them. In terms of meeting opportunities on the field and supporting qualified men, multitudes of congregations are reluctant to make the commitment. Raising mission support is a tedious, expensive process, at times seemingly impossible. Richard Cave, one of our ex-colleagues here in Belo Horizonte, once observed: "While raising support I lost my faith seven times and I think I only regained it six times!" Missionary and missions motivator Cline Paden forcefully observed on this problem of congregation indifference to missions:

A church spawned in indifference, cradled in legalism, spoon-fed on spiritual pablum, and rocked to sleep in the lap of material luxury will never share its treasure with others. Such a program breeds selfishness and crass indifference to the cries of the lost. It will never develop the altruistic spirit which must either distribute its blessings to others or else it dies. Until our stony hearts and flinty heads have been touched and tendered by the only good news worthy of our best efforts and our very lives, it is all over with our evangelistic spirit.[1]

Few indeed are the local churches that budget more than half of their financial resources, and *all* of their spiritual resources, to fulfilling their mission. Few even are those that devote a quarter of their collective resources and energies to Missions. If we could compile an accurate chart on budget percentages, we might find that the average congregation earmarks some ten to twenty percent of her contributions to all forms of outreach combined, spending the balance on her own particular wants and needs. If this is the situation in the average church, what is the situation with those which comprise the lower end of the scale, those which give only spasmodically to missionary outreach?

Missions More Than Money

We have mentioned so far only the financial aspect of missionary outreach. However, the missions enterprise is far more than money. Missions involve men, spiritually and technically prepared for a lifetime of dedication to this one compelling task. In reality, the local church should be a generating force, motivating and preparing soldiers for the Lord's battlefronts. We will present later in the book the pessimistic results of a survey taken among missionaries, in which they were asked to identify the source of their motivation to serve in some other land. Almost none responded that they had been moved to such outreach by the leaders and members of their own home congregations!

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[1]Cline Paden, "Ta Ethne", *Firm Foundation.* November 6, 1973, p. 4

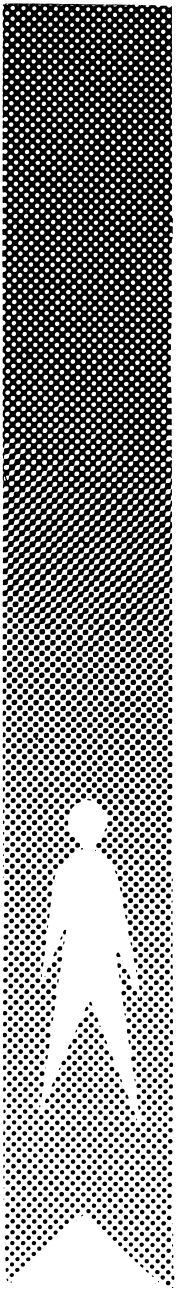
A Genuine Partnership

Missions must be a genuine partnership – a three-way alliance, which includes Christ, the local church and the front line Christian soldier. There is abundant evidence that local Christians normally are not motivated to dedicate themselves to the Great Commision placed in their hands. Relatively few arise out of, or are selected from, their own congregations. One of the whys of this volume, then, is to help educate and motivate the local church, that vital sub-station in Christ's power system, to live up gloriously to her purpose of being.

And even if a church is highly motivated, she may still miss the missions mark. I have the distinct impression that much of our foreign outreach over the years has been by trial-and-error. It has only been recently that we have begun to take preparation seriously and to attempt to analyze where and how we are going, as we head out on the high road of "soul-saving internationally". And even now, we appear to be still in the kindergarten stage of understanding the missionary task of the church. When we approach the subjects of Mission Education in the Local Church, or of Mission Ethics, for example, we are almost plowing new ground. What little light we can pick up along the way comes from the experiences of other religious groups or from hard (and sometimes, tragic) personal experience on the field.

Dawning of a New Age?

There are some signs that we are entering at least the dawning of a New Age of Missions in the church. It is not yet fully developed, by any means, but there are indications that the child may someday become a man. It was observed by his father about the scrawny infant who became William the Conqueror: "He is little, but he will grow". This book is designed to help us, the Lord's church, to grow to missions maturity – to fan to brightness that spark already kindled in the Word and in our present stage of development, so that we may say honestly of our generation of Christians and congregations: "There is a fire in our bones to share with all men the light and warmth that can be theirs in Christ" (Jeremiah 20:9).



Part II
THE TASK

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ..."
(Matthew 28:19 KJV).

CHAPTER 1
WHAT MAKES A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH?

In order to understand the nature of the church as described in the New Testament, it is necessary to strip away all of the traditions and opinions that, over the centuries, have distorted her true nature. We have become so accustomed to congregations as they function here and now that we often lose sight of their more basic functions and purposes, coming to look on them rather as expensive structures of brick and glass, with complex programs for the benefit and entertainment of their members. Thus, they become somewhat exclusive clubs, composed of the "saints", most of whom have the same cultural level of values and interests. Robert Fife observed (in another context, but with application to our basic reason for being as a church):

> We come with an insight which has been encumbered by traditions, institutions, and vested interests. The problmes we face involve our emotions, the "loaded terms", the sanctified customs, the loyalties and associations of the years.[1]

Source of Misconceptions

Can it be that Fife's list of encumbrances bears a very large part in our misconceptions over what the church is really all about? We might liken the problem to the encrustation built up on a treasure chest which for centuries has lain on the ocean floor. Imperceptibly, changes take place, until the original shiny chest has become a dull grey lump, almost totally unrecognizable for what it is. That which was once sharply defined has become indefinite in nature and purpose, hiding from all of the world its true value.

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[1]Dr. Robert O. Fife. *Communion Quester,* Vol. IV, No. 2, p. 10

At the outset, then, let us attempt to chisel away all human encrustations and get down to the very treasure, itself — the all-encompassing nature and the all-consuming mission of the Church of Jesus Christ. To do this, let us imagine a scene in Heaven, with apologies to Job, Chapter I:

The Sons of God Present Themselves Before the Lord

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and among them were elders, preachers and deacons. And the Lord enquired of them, "You who are leaders of My people, what do you think? How may a true Church of Jesus Christ be known?"

Without hesitation came the reply from a thousand throats, "By the name she wears!"

"Not so," responded the Almighty. "My Word indicates a variety of descriptive phrases by which she may be called."

"Then by her doctrincal correctness," added these stalwarts of the Faith.

"Yes, doctrinal purity is important," answered the All-knowing, "but it isn't the only consideration. The doctrine of the Pharisees was 'correct', but other necessary ingredients – judgment, mercy and faith – were missing entirely. And remember this: Their very 'soundness' drove them to crucify their Savior. 'Soundness of doctrine' launched the Inquisition in Europe, signing the death warrants of thousands who deviated even slightly from the accepted beliefs of the day. It was a desire for credal correctness that motivated a bishop centuries ago to kick a colleague to death in a house of worship. And today, it is concern for doctrinal purity, above all else, that moves men to make constant verbal and written attacks on their brethren, in spite of injunctions to the contrary in the books of Romans and James. Certainly, obedience to Truth is essential, but there are other considerations just as important in identifying My Kingdom."

"Well, then, Father, she must be known by her growth and acceptance around the world."

"Growth? Islam is outstripping faith in My Son. Other movements, religious and political, are considerably more popular at times than the Way."

"Meeting place? We have just built a modern plant, one of the finest in the brotherhood."

"No, son. My saints in the beginning had no temples, no cathedrals, no plants. They *were* a plant, growing out of Christ, their root."

"Wealth, then? The churches generally have pretty good contributions these days, not always up to the budget, but sizeable."

"What is your wealth? Have you a copper penny or a heel of bread without me? Wealth? More than one religious body in the world has vast wealth stored up in treasuries and museums. No, unless your wealth is of the Spirit, it counts for little. And your spirit of sacrifice ... do you even conceive in a small way what self-sacrifice means, you who are blessed above all peoples with lands and vehicles, houses and furnishings? Can you say in truth that you are the 'offscourings of all men', in real want and deprivation for your faith? Are you giving as My children did in Macedonia, beyond your ability and out of your deep poverty?"

"Well, then, Lord, what are the true characteristics of the church of the New Testament?"

"Although some of these points you have raised are considerations in identifying the church, they are not necessarily the only ones, or even the basic ones. Let us ponder the nature of My saints in that first congregation in Jerusalem, for in their hearts and works you will find the true basics. First, they were concerned for doctrinal faithfulness. But this was not an academic knowledge of My Word, nor a legalistic ful-

fillment of My Will. Rather, it was a living knowledge, one that changed them and gave them a 'prophetic' mission – a constant mission of teaching and preaching.

"They continued breaking bread, not just in the weekly fellowship of the Lord's Supper, but in a daily brotherhood of love and sharing their physical blessings. They continued in prayer and praising My Name. If you fulfill all else, but do not pray continually as a group of My children, you are wasting your time and Mine. Those people were so thhankful that they burst forth daily in prayer.

"Moreover, they were filled with gladness and singleness of heart. These were a happy, joyful people, united in purpose and in mutual love. They could be this way, for they were filled with My Spirit, empowered by my presence in their hearts.

"Their concern for one another can be seen in their commonality of goods, as well as in their practice of discipline. They realized that the most cruel possible treatment of others was to abandon them, to fail them in their need, or to permit them to continue in sin, without loving correction. But this correction was according to the plan which My Son laid down for such cases.

"Finally, they had an all-consuming sense of Mission. That church grew and stretched to Judea, Samaria, and to many other points beyond the horizon. Her very boldness filled all of Jerusalem, and then all of the known world, with awe and respect for them and their cause.

"Truly, My sons, if you would be the church of Jesus Christ on earth, your emphasis must always be where it was in the beginning. There must be a visible aura about you – a light of unquestioned obedience to My Word, of example, inspiring love for one another and total dedication to My calling. You must be wrapped up in an all-out mission to the lost everywhere. If you meet these basic essentials, you *are* the

church of Jesus Christ. Otherwise, you are not His church, regardless of what you may claim to be."[2]

Characteristics of the Church

What, then, are the basic characteristics of a New Testament church? If we really get down to the essentials, the list will read something like this:

1. A New Testament church worships regularly in the name of our Lord, observing sincerely His Supper and rededicating herself continually to her purposes for being.

2. She obeys implicitely His Word and submits to His authority, according to Matthew 28:18, Romans 6:17, and Colossians 1:18ff.

3. She is united in true brotherly love, in fulfillment of His great priestly prayer in John 17:21.

4. She demonstrates genuine love and concern, not just for the "brethren", but also for all men, according to John 13:35, Mark 12:33 and Galatians 6:10. In fact, the predominant characteristic of Christ's followers, the one by which they should be known first and foremost, is their consistent love for one another, a love which also extends to all of God's creatures.

5. She fulfills her mission to the limits of her faith and opportunitites, according to Philippians 2:9–11. A profound sense of gratitude to Christ and concern for unsaved men will set a church's collective bones on fire, as nothing else will do. If we engage in missions out of a sense of duty or moral pressure, we will create a fire that is more smoke than flame.

Regarding our function as the church, Paul instructs us:

> "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to devote ourselves to the good deeds for which God has designed us" (Ephesians 2:10).

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[2]Glover Shipp. Created initially for a sermon

Missions writer J. Allan Ranck says this about our purpose as a church:

> ... because it has one Lord, the church is one. It thereby has one mission, one purpose for its existence. That mission is to make Jesus Christ known to the world and to accomplish the mission that Jesus Himself came to achieve.[3]

Archibald McClean gave this very succinct evaluation of the purpose and mission of the church:

> If this church should lose sight of its true mission, it would cease to be a church of Christ. It would degenerate into a club of some sort. This club might be made up of intelligent-looking and perfumed people; they might have a superb building ... perfect in all its appointments; they might have a very cultured and eloquent man on their rostrum; their music might be the finest in the world; but that would not be a church in any true and full and divine sense of the word. It may carve "Church of Christ" on its cornerstone and over its entrance, but losing its sight of its one proper mission, and ceasing to enjoy the presence of its Lord, it is not a church, and has no right to call itself by that holy name. It is a human and not a divine institution.[4]

Concern for Missions

In this study, we are concerned primarily with the fifth point listed above, although it cannot be successfully divorced from the other four. Because of the authority of Christ in our lives, because of our love, and because of our sense of mission, we function as New Testament Churches and Christians.

What is the mission of the local church? According to Harold R. Cook, it is an extension of the mission of every member of the Body[5] Someone has observed on our individual task to

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[3]J. Allen Ranck. *Education for Mission*, p. 3

[4]Archibald McClean. *Where the Bible Speaks.* Quoted in Gospel Advocate, November 1, 1973, p. 703

[5]Harold R. Cook. *An Introduction to Christian Missions*, p. 8ff

reach the lost: "Every man is either a missionary ... or a mission."

Mission, then, must be at the center of the Christian's existence and at the very heart of every congregation. Mission is the life of the church. The Clairemont Church of Christ, in San Diego, California, sees her evangelistic task clearly. On the inside portals of the vestibule of her meeting place is lettered, for all to see as they leave the worship hour: "You are now entering the mission field." A church which has her mission always before her face is a live, growing church. On the other hand, a church which is losing sight of her mission is losing her life, in a very real way.

Returning to our earlier question, what is true congregation of Jesus Christ? She is one totally faithful to her calling:

> I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut: I know you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name (Revelation 3:8 RSV).

Faithful to her calling, ready to enter the open doors set before her by the Lord – this is a church of Christ! A true New Testament church must be, by her very nature, faithful to her mission of saving souls in all the world.

In fact, we might say that the words "mission" and "church" are in a sense inseparable. A church of our Lord Jesus is wholly missionary. And the reverse is also true: A congregation that is not thoroughly dedicated to saving souls everywhere possible is no church of the Lord, regardless of what else she might teach or practice. Emil Brunner once wrote: "The church exists by mission as fire exists by burning."[6] As fire is only fire if it burns, so the church can only be the church by aggressive, love-motivated soul reaching.

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[6]Emil Brunner. *The Word and The World,* p. 108

For a congregation to belong to Christ, it must be assumed that she is willing to share her Savior completely and continuously. Of course, the expression of her mission will be unique to that congregation, according to the manner in which the Lord opens doors of opportunity for her and according to how He leads through these doors. But share she must – to her community, to whatever black holes of spiritual darkness exist about her, to her nation and to her world.

An Unquenchable Fellowship

A New Testament church cannot be quenched! Her influence for the Lord will be felt both at home and abroad. In her own community many will respect her and turn to Christ, for "Behold, how they love one another, how they give, how they serve, how they shine ... This must be a church filled with the Spirit of Christ. What other one in our city can match this one in Christlikeness?"

And abroad thousands will rise up and call her blessed, because through her total dedication to her mission, Christ has come to live for them, and His Holy Spirit now dwells in their hearts ...

Is not this a church of Christ? God give us 10,000 or even 100,000 such churches, and the banner of Jesus will fly over every land and city in our world! Some such churches already exist; praise the Lord for them. But we have the strong impression that many are more concerned with being Marthas than Marys – preoccupied over housekeeping chores within the walls of a meeting place, rather than the better part – determining what are the higher and nobler spiritual values and applying them to our sick, fractured world, with all deliberate haste. God give us great spiritual churches, in the style of Philippi of old, which will give of themselves to actual bankruptcy, to fulfill their purpose for being, that of leading the lost of every land and tongue to their only Hope.[7]

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[7]See II Corinthians, chapter 8, and Philippians 4:10–20, for graphic accounts of Philippi's generous mission spirit

How Broad Is Our Field?

Clearly, the mission of a church is to share Christ with as many souls, as far afield as possible. When the Great Commission was given by our Lord, He told the apostles to begin in Jerusalem, and then to reach Judaea, Samaria and the entire world. Every congregation has her own Jerusalem (home city or area) Judaea (state), Samaria (neighbouring states) and world to reach. Our Lord has set no geographical limits to the scope of any congregation's outreach. So, if we stake out fences, we do so without Scriptural authority. Our field is the world, and must always be the world, until He returns.

However, instead of such a view of missions, many congregations have a sort of "Bless me, my wife, my son John and his wife; us four and no more" attitude. Instead of a worldview that is world encompassing, they look on their mission project (if any) as a "farm club" extension of their local work, jealously guarding their territorial rights and limiting their mission interests solely to it.

Germinal Christian Communities

What is the mission of a local church? To reconcile men everywhere to Christ, and then to form these converts into *taught, germinal* Christian communities. By germinal, we mean growing and self-perpetuating churches everywhere in the world, churches that in turn are missionary in motivation. This is the great mission of the local church, a mission far above even children's homes, schools and other projects, worthwhile as they may be.

The task of reconciling men to Christ is continuous and all-consuming, because of the nature of man, the sacrifice of Christ for man, and the thrust of the Great Commission. This Commission is rendered in the Greek in a form which suggests the present progressive: "In going ... teach!" According to our Lord, it is normal Christian activity, as we travel through life, to teach and lead men to Christ, gathering them into *germinal* congregations in every nation and tribe. This simply means that they are germinated and developed for the purpose of germinating yet more Christians and congregations. People cannot become

Christians except one at a time, and yet our salvation is not solitary. God's people are called together in a community or body. The members (in New Testament times) did not function only as individual Christians, but as a local body ... The members were all tellers, not only at home, but everywhere they went (Acts 8:4).

Her Nature: To Reach All Men

For a genuine church of Jesus Christ, the Great Commission is not necessary. There is no need to invoke the Commission for such a church. By her very nature, she must go out with the message of redemption, and no power on this earth can stop her!

But the Commission says ever more. It literally reads *ta ethne,* which means "all tribes, clans, and families," an expression repeated for good measure in Romans 16:16, 25 and 26, as well as in Revelation 5:9 and 7:9.

What is the scope of our mission in this complex, exploding world? Every human family! We are to teach all people, not just make a token "color-me-red" effort, by sending a man to some country, and then checking it off our list as having been "reached". This is a grossly oversimplified response to our Lord's battle call. He has built no fences and has marked off no arbitrary limits for any congregation's outreach. Each must go to every possible creature with the reconciling message of Christ. This, after all, is our mission and our reason for being as the Lord's church.

CHAPTER 2
OUR MISSION ROOTS

Johnson Grass is an eternal plague, because its roots spread out in every direction, in a maze of joints and feeders. I can vividly recall my farm days, when it was necessary at times to dig a "foxhole" a yard deep and perhaps more than a yard in length and width, in an effort to do away with a clump's root system.

However, Johnson Grass and other types of tenancious plant life can teach us a lesson about our own Christian mission roots. These species are always reaching out and giving birth to countless new starts. Here in Brazil rapidly growing eucalyptus trees are used for making charcoal and paper. When it comes time to harvest a mountainside stand of this hardy species, every tree is cut down, leaving a desolation that appears to be permanent. However, only a few weeks later one can see new shoots springing up all around the stumps. In place of one tree, second generation growth may count three or four. In fact, growth cannot be stopped, for the extensive root system forces new, multiplied life out of seemingly dead trunks.

Our Roots Reach Far Back

In like manner the Church's missionary roots reach far back into history, drawing on God's eternal power for continuity and multiplication, down through the centuries. Our Mission to man did not begin with the Commission, given by Christ, nor with the day of Pentecost, in Acts, chapter 2. As pointed out in my book, *Fire in My Bones*,

> I had been reared on the Great Commission, so it was natural for me to understand that the New Testament had a strong missionary message. I assumed that God's missionary theme largely began with Matthew 28 and ended with Acts 28, even though I recognized that there were hints at missionary outreach in the Old Testament, such as the case of Jonah,

who preached repentance to a land other than God's chosen nation, Israel.

But in recent years, as I studied the Old Testament in more depth, a recurring theme began to capture my attention. I came to see that this neglected majority of Scripture is filled with missionary messages. So, out of curiosity and then mounting interest, I re-read the Old Testament, noting possible missionary lessons from its pages. By the time I had read to Jeremiah's famous statement about a missionary fire in his bones, more than seventy-five such topics had already been listed!

It was abundantly clear to me by then that the Lord has always reached out to men of all nations. He has always called for repentance, on the part of all peoples. He has always anticipated, through His holy messengers, the redemption of men of every land. But sadly, for forty years I had somehow missed the greater part of His continuing missionary message throughout the Bible![8]

Since long before the fall in Eden, God's eternal purpose for man was being worked out (Ephesians 3:10–11).

One of the keys to His dealings with man has been through men consumed with His message of redemption.[9]

From the very beginning of the Creator's dealings with man, He has cared and has come to man, in the form of voices, fires, earthquakes, angels and prophets, and above all of these manifestations, He walked this earth, in the person of His own Son and His all-powerful Spirit. His creation was good and was both for the care of man and for His eternal Glory (Genesis 1:31). It was His wish that all of His created beings live up to their purpose and obey Him, for their own salvation. When men so frequently fell, the Father was there to pick them up. When they wandered from His pathway, He gently (at times) and forcibly

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[8]Glover Shipp, *Fire In My Bones,* p. IV
[9]*op.cit.*, p. V

(at other times) pointed them back in the right direction (for example, in the cases of the fall of Adam and Eve, the Flood and the Tower of Babel). He sent His Messengers to warn them. Faithful men, such as Noah, preached repentance (II Peter 2:5). It is entirely within the realm of divine grace that all of the earth could have been saved through Noah's preaching. The fact that only seven other souls listened to Noah's warning doesn't negate the validity of the Lord's desire to save His creatures (II Peter 3:9).

Concern Shown In Abraham

Our Lord's concern for all peoples was next plainly seen in His choosing of Abraham, as His chosen vessel, to be a source of blessing and salvation to all families of the earth (Genesis 12:2). With this and subsequent promises Abraham and his descendents, through Isaac, became God's *covenant people* (Genesis 17:10).

As time passed this covenant became more clearly defined, as God revealed to His people more and more specifically its privileges and responsibilities:

> "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation ..." (Exodus 19:5 RSV).

As Hogg observes, this convenant focused attention upon Israel as a chosen people – the people of God. He goes on to say:

> God promised that in faithful witness to His will, Israel should find its fulfillment. The chosen people existed to serve God's purpose in the world.[10]

What Was The Jews' Purpose?

What was this purpose? Many Jews believed that the covenant made them a superior race. They believed themselves to be superior to and separate from all other nations. (John 4:9, Acts

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[10]W. Richey Hogg. *One World One Mission*, p. 25

11:1–3) In this they erred, grievously, because for the Lord, covenant meant far more than social and spiritual separation. Kline defines covenant as:

> ... a sanction-sealed commitment to maintain a particular relationship or follow a stipulated course of action ... a relationship under sanction.[11]

De Riddler enlarges on this theme by stating:

> In choosing Abraham and his seed as primary recipients of His covenant this does not mean that the purpose of God has been altered. God neither surrenders His claim upon the nations, nor does He abandon His purposes for the nations ... In this early covenant for the nations (Genesis 12:2) the essential features basic to the missionary task are to be found ... God has a purpose for all nations which He is working out though Abraham, and that election is for service, not merely personal advantage.[12]

What was the purpose of God in selecting Israel as His chosen people? Cullman affirms that Israel exists to tell the World of an actual fact of which it is totally unaware: that the God whom Israel serves is actually Lord of all.[13] De Ridder lists three purposes for Israel:

1. To communicate to the world the divine oracle received from God.

2. To speak in the name of Yahweh.

3. To testify under this Lordship in faith.[14]

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[11]Meredith G. Kline, By Oath Consigned: *A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism*, p. 16

[12]Richard R. De Ridder, *Discipling The Nations*, p. 26

[13]Oscar Cullman, *Christ and Time*, p. 186ff

[14]De Ridder, *op.cit.*, p. 34

Mission To Serve

Israel's mission then became to serve as God's prophets, priests and ambassadors to the nations. Yes, Israel was saved to save. She was placed at the crossroads of the ancient world to be His witness.[15] As Isaiah 49:6 says it, she was to be a light to the Gentiles, God's salvation to the end of the earth. This same theme is repeated in various other passages. Among these we quote three, clearly which state the Lord's purpose through Israel:

> He says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6 RSV).

> "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations shall worship before Him. For dominion belongs to the Lord, and He rules over the nations" (Psalms 22:27–28 RSV).

> "For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 1:11 RSV).

Concept Slow To Develop

This concept was slow to develop in Jewish thinking, even though the Lord had spoken clearly on the attitude Israel was to have toward the foreigner in her midst.[16] Cook points out that Israel's slowness to learn – indeed, she never did learn fully – the real purpose of God in her history is sad, but does not obscure the definite purpose in the divine call to Israel.[17] Her lack of understanding, and her subsequent perversion of her task, can be seen in Jonah's shock over God's concern for cruel,

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[15]See my book, *Fire In My Bones,* chapter 17, for further details on Israel's Missionary purpose

[16]In this regard see Ex. 22:21, Lv. 24:22, Deut. 1:16, 10:19 and 31:12

[17]Edmund F. Cook, *The Missionary Message of the Bible,* p. 36

pagan Nineveh (Jonah 3:1–2), and Israel's undoubted perplexity over such passages as Isaiah 19:23–25 and Amos 9:7:

> "In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the Lord of hosts has blessed, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the word of my hands, and Israel my heritage'."

> "Are you not like the Ethiopians to me, O people of Israel?" says the Lord. "Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?"

The later prophets continually reminded Israel that she had a holy commitment to the nations. Eichhorn tells us:

> Prophet, priest and psalmist possessed a patient, tireless ... course that made them remind Israel again and again: you are all *gerim* (foreigners) before God ... He loves the alien ... therefore, you too must love the *gerim* ... for many nations will join themselves to the Eternal and become His people ...[18]

Rowley adds that

> ... this developed (note the concern of Isaiah, Jonah, Amos for the poeples of the world) from the fundamental thought of the Old Testament on the nature of man as created in God's image ... as a member of a corporate society ... ultimately concerned for the life of the nations other than their own.[19]

This, then, was heaven's commission to the Jews, a despised minority of their day. As Hogg so rightly says,

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[18]D.M. Eichhorn, *Conversion to Judaism,* pp. 31–32

[19]H.H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel,* pp. 99ff

... to them, the people of the covenant, God entrusted a mission to the world.[20]

Down through the centuries and even in exile in Assyria and Babylonia, many still remained in aloof isolation from surrounding peoples, in an effort to preserve their national identity and faith. A few, a prophetic remnant, saw God's purpose for Israel. Some even began, before and during the exile period, to convert those of other nations to the faith in God. For the most part, however, God's missionary call was ignored, as His people erroneously continued to live within their shell of nationalism.

A Change In World View

For the call to be heard and obeyed, a drastic shakeup in Jewish "world view" was required. This change in point of view began with the voluntary migration of Jewish merchants, probably in the days of Solomon, who carried on extensive trade as far away as India (I Kings 10). In Isaiah's day and later, in the times of Ezekiel, China and her silk are mentioned in the Bible text (Is. 49:12, Ezek. 16:10, 13). By New Testament times Jews were scattered, voluntarily and as a result of Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek and Roman population redistribution policies, in every part of the known world, including down into Arabia, Ethiopia and the heart of Africa, to the Far East, Central and Northern Europe, Russia and England, as well as throughout the entire Roman Empire, Babylonia, Persia and Parthia. It is estimated that, in New Testament times, there were perhaps 100,000 Jews in Asia Minor, 100,000 in Babylonia-Persia and 50,000 in Rome. A third of the Alexandrian population was Jewish.[21]

Wherever they went, the people of God opened synagogues and attached school, which served as points of contact with God and His word. Because of this, and of their active financial, commercial and handicraft ventures, these scattered Jews – the Diaspora – came to have a spiritual influence on other lands

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20W. Richey Hogg, *op.cit.*, p. 27

21See De Ridder, *op.cit.*, pp. 58–75, for a fascinating account of the spread of Jewish colonies throughout the world of that day.

(Acts 15:21). They also translated the Old Testament into the vernacular (Assyrian, Greek, Coptic, Old Hebrew, Media, Iberian, Elamite, Aramaic, Syriac, Arabic, Persian and other tongues), which facilitated this process of assimulation into the Jewish faith.

Somewhere along the line, as these pilgrims were scattered far and wide, they began to actively convert others to their faith. Eichhorn observes, however, that although

> Judaism ... was the religion of the people with a mission, its spread was not occasioned by central authority within the community ... the impetus to witness came from within each community.[22]

Apparently, the local Jewish clan, including some of her rabbis, began to think missions, as a means of expanding God's kingdom and increasing His number of children: Orally and by pen the Israelites were educated to do personal work for their God among the Gentiles.[23]

Successful Proselytism

That this developing wave of proselytism was successful can be seen in the fact that more than half of Ethiopia became Jewish. In other areas, such as Alexandria, Babylonia, Persia, Asia Minor, Rome and along the northern coast of Africa, a considerable number of Gentiles became either proselytes or at least followers of Judaism. Aggressive proselytism can be seen among the Pharisees, who were condemned by Jesus, not for their ardent attempts to convert others, but for their hypocricy (Matt. 23:15). Elsewhere in the New Testament we see evidence of Jewish missionary zeal. For example, the Centurion (Matthew, chapter 8), Cornelius (Acts 10) and the multitude of pious Gentiles (Acts 13:43, 48; 14:1, 17:4, 12;18:7, 19:9–10 and 28:28).

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[22]D.M. Eichhorn, *op.cit.*, p. 47

[23]John Peterson, *Missionary Methods of Early Judaism in The Early Roman Empire.* Dissertation, Chicago Divinity School, 1946, cited in de Ridder, *op.cit.*, p. 95

When Christianity came on the scene, there were already large numbers of honest Gentile souls unconsciously prepared for the message of salvation, because of the at least partial success of the Jews in fulfilling their mission to the Gentiles. How much more difficult Paul's task would have been, for example, had this softening-up task not been accomplished earlier!

Hogg reminds us that,

> In the old covenant there were those sensitively aware of God's purpose. They saw in Israel's disobedience the need for God to make a new covenant (Jer. 31:31–33). In the fullness of time it came ... [24]

In Christ Jesus we are partners with God in this new covenant (Heb. 8:13, 12:24). We are therefore "the people of the covenant." Our mission roots go back to our Creator and to His people of pre-Christian ages. Shall we fulfill our mission, as His covenant-bound people, or shall we turn inward on ourselves, as did many of the Jews?

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[24] W. Richey Hogg, *op.cit.*, p. 30

CHAPTER 3
OUR COMMANDER'S MARCHING ORDERS

Jesus Chirst, Commander-in-Chief! He is more than man; He is more than superman; He is God's appointed Captain for this Christian age. Read about Him and His all-compassing authority in Matthew 28:18 and Colossians 1:13–23. He is man's only Liberator, Redeemer and Guide. All things were made by Him and for Him. He is before all things and upon Him depends the daily functioning of the universe. He is the "cosmic glue" that holds it all together (John 1:1–4, Colossians 1:16). Thus, it can be safely asserted that everything and everyone depends upon Him for physical and spiritual sustenance. He is the "Lord of every man" (I Corinthians 11:3).

His Link With Other Men

The Christ depends on no man for the daily operation of the world, except in the sense of doing our utmost to subdue, protect and preserve this globe which He has ceded to us. However, in the spiritual realm, He has chosen to place His supreme treasure of eternal salvation in earthern vessels; that is, in human beings (II Corinthians 4:7). He has elected to make men His link with other men (Romans 10:14–17). We understand this fact, but relatively few of us act upon it. We quote His Great Commission – His marching orders – but apply them to someone else. However, His orders are totally literal and are for every generation.

His Commission is given a number of times, for emphasis, in the New Testament. These repetitions are found in various forms in Matthew 28:18–20, Mark 16:15–16, Luke 24:44–49, John 20:19–20, Acts 1:8 and Romans 10:8–18. First issued by Christ to His apostles, these marching orders were transmitted to God's people in all generations. So we are as vitally bound to them and their implications as were their original recipients in the first generation of the church.

What Makes The Commission Great?[25]

First, the holy mission transmitted to us is great because of its author, Jesus Christ, spoken by His own lips in the first five books of the New Testament.

Second, it is great because of its message. The basic message of the Gospel is not just to build meeting places or organizations. It is not just to feed the world's hungry or clothe its poor. It is not just to worship and study. It's central theme is forever the Good News of redemption, God's only power to save, in any age (Romans 1:16).

Third, it is great because of its scope. The Gospel is for every creature in all nations throughout all of the world. (See Acts 1: 8, Romans 10:18, Colossians 1:23, along with the other passages more normally considered the Commission of Christ to His followers.)

Fourth, it is great because of its duration. In Matthew 28:20 the expression, "the end of the world", is used in connection with the Commission; therefore, it is right to believe (and insist) that the requirement to "go" is bound on God's people, as long as the world stands.

Why Obey The Marching Orders?

There are many compelling reasons why God's people must fulfill the orders by Christ for the redemption of mankind. The following are a few of these reasons:

First, there is heaven's concern for the lost. God loves sinners (John 3:16). Christ died for all (Hebrews 2:9). The Holy Spirit is concerned (Revelation 22:17). The angels of heaven are concerned (Luke 15:7–10).

Second, there is the plain and simple command to "Go teach and preach the Gospel" (Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15).

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[25]Based upon an article by Pat Henry Casey in *Firm Foundation*, issue of October 23, 1973

God's people must be reminded that this is a *command* and not some option.

Third, there is the salvation of the individual child of God involved in his or her obedience to the command. In I Timothy 4:16 the Bible says, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."

Fourth, there is the principle as set forth by the "golden rule", in Matthew 7:12. Surely, you want to be saved, and likewise, should desire that others be saved (Romans 10:1–3).

Fifth, there is the example of the early church. Acts 5:42 says, "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

Sixth, there is the value of the soul (Matthew 16:26). If a child of God fails to believe and obey the Great Commission, then that disobedient soul will be lost; also, many other souls in sin, who might have been saved if the commission had been carried out, will be lost (Ezekiel 3:17–19)".[26]

Assuming, then, that we seriously accept His Marching Orders as binding on us today, individually and collectively, let us examine the task before us, some true and false motivations for missions, some hindrances in the path of total mission, and then finally, how to get on with this priority task. First, however, let us look at another motivating and empowering force, greater than any command, which prepares us for and impels us to the mission task.

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[26] *ibid.*

CHAPTER 4
MISSIONS: MORE THAN A COMMAND

Relatively few have ever seriously denied the consistency of Christ in announcing to the apostles His Great Commission, nor His right to include it prominently in His Marching Orders. He had received all authority, both in Heaven and on earth, from His Father (Matthew 28:18, Colossians 1:16–19, John 1:1–5). He had died for all men, in fulfillment of God's external purpose (Ephesians 3:10–11). As God's Reconciling Force in the world, He cannot be ignored, for without Him man is totally and permanently lost (Rom. 3:9, Gal. 3:22, Eph. 2:12). As De Ridder puts it,

> The Bible reveals a God who *commands* man's attention, a Christ who *compels* his allegiance, and a concept of sin and salvation that presents mankind with alternatives it *cannot* ignore.[27]

Repent or Perish

It becomes then a case of "repent or perish," for all men, of all generations, nations and races. The world is completely dependent on Christ, and completely subject to His authority, as indicated by Paul, in I Corinthians 11:3.

Continuing this same thought, De Ridder observes:

> As a creature man owes God obedience and the goal of his life has been appointed to him by the Creator. In the preaching of the Gospel the Creator confronts the creature with the purpose of his having been created.[28]

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27 Richard R. De Ridder, *Discipling the Nations,* p. 136
28 *Op.cit., p. 189*

God wills that all men be saved and that this salvation be granted through the divinely ordained process of blood redemption (II Pet. 3:9, Eph. 1:7, Heb. 9:22). He wills that all men be saved through the inspired but very individual means of faith, repentance, confession and baptism (Heb. 11:6, Jn. 8:24, Lu. 13:3, Mt. 10:32, Mk. 16:16, Ac. 2:38, 22:16, 3:19, 16:31–33, Rom. 6:3–8, 10:9–10, Gal. 3:27, Col. 2:12, I Pet. 3:21).

No Limitation Placed

No limitation is placed on the extent or duration of this commission's fulfillment. It is for all ages, to the end of time. Those fulfilling it do so by our sovereign Lord's orders and they go out authorized by Him. They have every right and duty to be where they are, proclaiming His saving message to the lost. No man, or government, has the divine right to prohibit their free movement, in the fulfillment of Christ's commission (Acts 5: 29).

An Urgent Heavenly Mandate

The Christian's task, then, is from Heaven and is urgent. A good illustration of its urgency is seen in questions raised frequently by Brazilians, especially when a new congregation is being initiated. These questions are generally framed along the following lines:

> If you are really the New Testament Church, as you affirm, and if you really are offering the only hope we have, why are you so late arriving here in our city (or our suburb)? My father (mother, grandparents, etc.) died just last year, having never heard this message ...

How do we answer such a question? *Lamely!* The saddest part of it all is that the question is repeated over and over, in area after area of this vast nation and even more vast world. Pat McGee, for many years one of the Lord's frontline soldiers in teeming Indonesia, speaks to this point in pungent language:

> Trapped in the wreck of humanity, lost without God, are countless millions of precious souls mangled and dying in sin. For them there is no hope ... NOT A CHANCE IN A MIL-

LION ...unless you and I do something now to get them out of the wreck of their sinful lives and to the hospital. They need the Doctor. They need blood. They need help, NOW![29]

Unmoved by the Command

Strangely enough, however, many who have tasted salvation today appear to be unmoved either by the appalling spiritual need of the world or by the command of Christ to preach the Gospel to every creature. On this point missionary-author Roland Allen observed several decades ago:

> The command is clear; it is repeated again and again. Christians do not question its authority; they do not doubt that Christ gave it; they do not doubt His right to give it; they simply disobey it. The command does not come home to them. It does not appear to have any binding force. This seems strange. We think that the mere repetition of the command should be enough.[30]

Apparently, it isn't enough, for missions are often considered as being in a secondary position in the life and fellowship of the local church, rather than in her heart. Could it be that we have missed a great, essential part of the power which moves and enables us to commit our individual and corporate church life to the worldwide expansion of our Lord's kingdom? Boer believes this is the case, observing that

> ... the Great Commision played a powerful role in the missionary witness of the early Church from the day of Pentecost ... It can be said that it always will be the heart and soul of all true missionary witness. But its meaning for and place in the life of the missionary community must, we believe, be differently construed than is customarily done. The Great Commission ... derives its meaning and power wholly and exclusively from the Pentecost event.[31]

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[29]Pat McGee, *Not a Chance In a Million,* p. 2
[30]Roland Allen, *Missionary Principles,* pp. 15–16
[31]Harry R. Boer, *Pentecost and Missions,* p. 47

Move Involved Than A Command

In other words, there is much more involved here than a cold, impersonal command: Spirit, life, action, sacrifice, persecution, martyrdom, great blessing, countless human souls and all eternity. The church is moved to her fulfillment of the Commission and is equipped for her task by factors more powerful and profound than any command. Albert von Ostertag explains this moving force in the following words:

> The early Church, the Church founded at Pentecost, is the blessed fellowship of Saints and beloved of God, filled with the Spirit of Christ. She received from her Head not merely the command, but also the inner, mighty, irresistable drive of life and love to transmit to her environment the life she has received in the same way in which she herself obtained it.[32]

Until Pentecost, some of God's people had certain powers of the Holy Spirit, to prepare them for specific tasks.[33] However, beginning with Pentecost, the Spirit descended upon all of Christ's followers, orienting and empowering them for every good work (Jn. 14:16–18, 16:13–14; I Cor. 3:16–17; Eph. 5:18, 6:18; Ph. 4:13).

In our emphasis on the command we have failed to utilize the rich resources of the Spirit. The command orders, but does not empower. It is for this reason that Jesus promised to be forever with His own in this task, through His indwelling Spirit (Mt. 28:20, Jn. 14:16–18). If we examine the missionary calling before us and then fearfully retreat from it, on the grounds that we are not sufficiently strong, spiritually or materially, to succeed at it, this is a clear demonstration of our tendency to look on Christ's words as a lifeless command and on ourselves as limited only to our own human resources.

Pentecost and Missions

Where is Pentecost in our thinking? Where is that Glorious Day, when the barriers were removed for all time between races

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[32]Albert von Ostertag, cited in Boer, *op.cit.*, p. 60

[33]See, for example, Jud. 13:25 and I Sam. 10:9–10

and nations? Pentecost was the opening in God's plan to gather from all nations His new Universal congregation. On that day His great missionary program was set in movement and the spiritual power and Lordship of Christ was announced. As Boer so powerfully puts it,

> The Church that has Pentecost standing at the beginning of her history is the church that has received the Comforter, the Comforter in whom Christ Himself accompanies His people. It is the Church that has a powerful program requiring activity and exertion in every area of her life. But it is most particularly the Church that has a mandate to draw all of the world within the circle of the light that is Christ.[34]

Pentecost is, without the least doubt, the birthdate of the New Testament Church. Yet, how rare is the dedication; how rare the Spirit-endowed power which causes us to sweep aside all obstacles in or fulfillment of Christ's Marching Orders! Our very reason for existing as the church is to continue and expand the Spirit of Pentecost. Ladd says:

> The Church is the fellowship of disciples of Jesus who have received the life of the Kingdom and are dedicated to the task of preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom in the world.[35]

Empowered by Christ and Pentecost

We can obey the command of Christ, not because it is a command and nothing more, but because we are empowered by His presence and put into motion by the far-reaching events of Pentecost. May our Lord help us to see that we are part of a universal, eternal, ongoing program, in brotherhood with our Lord, with His Spirit and with all of the stalwarts of the Faith, from Pentecost onward. Remember always, fellow Christians, that we of His church are set apart for Him, for the noble work to which He has called us, ever since the giving of the Commission and the Day of Pentecost (Acts 13:2).

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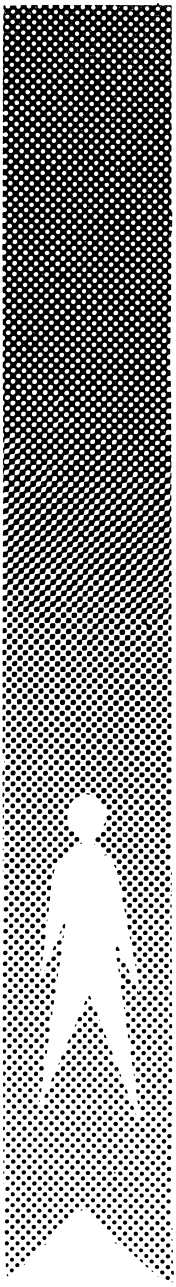
[34]Harry R. Boer, *op.cit.*, p. 61

[35]George Eldon Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, pp. 115–116



Part III
THE MISSIONARY CHALLENGE – THEN AND NOW

"As for those who had been scattered, they went through the country preaching the Word. Philip came down to Samaria and began proclaiming the Messiah to them" (Acts 8:4–5, NEB).

CHAPTER 5
THE MISSIONARY TASK – THEN

What is the nature of the church of Jesus Christ? Is she a temple on the corner of First and Main? A club for good moral people who share the same sub-culture and enjoy each other's company? No, the church is something much more profound than this. A Christian in Brazil recently prayed during a worship period: "Lord, we thank You that there are so many sinners here today!" Is not the church really this – a company of those who realize their weakness and their continual need for redemption? Is not the church a company of reachers – souls reaching upward for strength in Christ, and outward to transmit that strength received to the multitudes about them who are also weak and without direction in life?

A Continual Going

The very nature of the church and her members assumes going continually into the world with the Good News of redemption – whether that world is next door, next community, next county, or next country. Our Lord set the motivating example for us, when He left Heaven and went out to all men, embracing the world in His arms outstretched on the cross. Those who came after Him – His apostles, prophets, evangelists, the hosts of eary Christians – extended this sense of outreach, as they went both in body and spirit to all the world.

To be sure, they were commanded to go. However, I am convinced that they would have gone to all who would listen, with or without the command.

> There would be a mission even if we did not have a missionary command. For God always grants to his disciples through the working of the Holy Spirit a faith which is not passive, dumb, simply contemplative or selfish, but a faith

which produces in the Christian a restless concern for the salvation of others ... Thus the apostles "could not but speak". (Acts 4:20).[36]

Missionary Wendell Broom, quoting another source, observes:

> One person has said that missions would have become a part of the life of the church, even if the Lord had never commanded it. We would have gone, anyway. A study of the church during the first two or three hundred years indicated that definitely actually happened. Before the Gospels were circulated and what we know as the Great Commission was known to have been said by Christ, hundreds and thousands of His disciples were going anyway. They didn't know He had commanded it. But there is something inherent in our acceptance of the grace of God; our participation in the Holy Spirit and His fellowship; our blessings and guidance by the Word of God; the forgiveness of our sin and the purification of our hearts in the blood of Jesus; all of those things that operate in the Christian life for us; there is something in the very nature of that action within us that says, "Even if He didn't say so, we would have gone and have told others about it, because that, you just can't bottle up and keep to yourself."[37]

Theirs was an impulse to share their Savior, because they knew full well their need and His satisfaction of that need. Theirs was a motivation that could not be denied, even in the face of persecution and death. Theirs was a spirit of mission, arising out of the Spirit of the Living Christ. Theirs was the so-recent, compelling Pentecost event. So they went, and there is evidence that in the power of the Spirit, they preached the Good News to every creature of their day and world, as indicated by these passages: Acts 13:49, 19:10, Romans 10:17–18, Colossians 1:23.

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[36]George F. Vicedom, *The Mission of God*, p. 83

[37]Wendell Broom, from the tape of a sermon, (June 29, 1980), at Highland Church of Christ, Abilene, Texas

Growth of the Church in Early Centuries

By the end of Paul's lifetime (66 or 67 A.D.), the church of our Lord had spread beyond Palestine, reaching outward first to neighboring countries, such as Syria, Cyprus, Egypt, Cryene, Ethiopia, and then, irresistably, into the areas of Paul's journeys – Pisidia, Cilicia, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, Rome, Bithynia, Crete, Dalmatia, and possibly on into Spain.

By the close of the First Century, the Gospel message had reached Babylonia, Persia, India, the shores of the Black Sea, down into the lands loosely called Arabia and throughout all of the Roman Empire. Roman emperors were sensing the potential political threat of Christianity, knowing that a tenth, and then a fifth, a third and finally half of the inhabitants of the Empire were embracing, or at least sympathizing with, this movement. Every official effort to eradicate it failed. Just as efforts to stamp out a grass fire may only result in its more rapid spread, so persecution brought a sense of dedication and a public recognition to Christianity that it might not have had otherwise.

On into the Second the Third centuries, we see this same rapid growth. This same wholehearted dedication on the part of most of its followers; this same sense of urgency; this same spirit of missionary outreach continued, steadily gaining momentum. Even "pagan" areas, such as in Germany, northern France and Britain, heard the message.

Seemingly, nothing could stop the momentum of the church's early mission outreach, principally because of the attitude of her members:

"Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word" (Acts 8:4 RSV). Nothing could stop her momentum ... nothing but a loss of missionary zeal. As persecution ceased and as the Lord's Kingdom became the "official" religion of the Roman Empire, powerful and accepted, much of the earlier self-sacrificing zeal for souls was dissipated. For a religious time in history, however, the growth of the Kingdom was phenomenal.

How Accomplished?

How was this herculean task of sharing the Good News with every man of the early centuries accomplished? Travel was slow, uncertain and fraught with danger. Because of this, distances were relatively much greater than now and the risks involved were considerably higher. Even the "civilized" Roman Empire was a formidable barrier. All about God's men and women were moral license, oppressive government policies, outbreaks of provincial nationalism, wars, famines and such like. Read, for example, II Corinthians 11:23-27 and meditate on what just one man suffered for the cause of Christ. And besides all of this, there were the almost impossible barriers of ignorance, slavery, injustice, idolatry. . . .

How was the task accomplished? By all of God's soldiers, great and small, learned and illiterate, telling others of their newfound faith in Christ. They had discovered love – a commodity almost non-existent in the market places of the day. They had discovered hope, another commodity forgotten in the dog-eat-dog climate that prevailed in the Roman world, a world that lived only for "today", permitting neither life nor property to interfere with their own personal security and advancement. They had discovered Jesus, a truly precious revelation of Light in a world groping in darkness. They heard that Jesus, God's only Son, had willingly tasted death for every man, even slaves, who were considered by society to be of little more value than their owners' cattle.

An Overwhelming Discovery

This was a new and overwhelming discovery, one that could not be kept secret. It spread in every direction, in spite of increasing repression and even determined persecution. It laughed at national boundaries and ignored social classes. Christianity recognized no distinctions of race or sex, as indicated in Galatians 3:28. B. C. Goodpasture remarks on this point: "When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, He did so in disregard of the racial hatreds, the religious prejudices, and the social customs of His day."[38] The writer goes on to say:

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[38]Editorial, *Gospel Advocate*, November 1, 1973

When Paul was preaching the Gospel to the Greco-Roman world, slavery was prevalent ... Slavery was, and is, an unmitigated evil. It is contrary to the basic principles of the Gospel. Yet Paul never launched a frontal attack on slavery. Rather, he gave instructions regulative of the relations of master and servant (Eph. 6:5–9). He taught principles that would destroy slavery. The Golden Rule would strike the bonds from the slave's encumbered hand. The Roman government was corrupt beyond description in Paul's day, yet he never smote it. Rather, he enjoined submission to, and prayers for, the "powers that be" (Romans 13:1, I Tim. 2:1–2). He preached the Gospel, and left the leaven of truth to do its work. He used education rather than force. He preached the Gospel of peace concerning the Prince of Peace ...[39]

[39] *ibid.*

CHAPTER 6
THE MISSIONARY TASK – NOW

Current popular books bring home to us, in a starkly realistic manner, the explosive world in which we live.[40] Demographic, social, political and economic pressures continue to build. The most awesome weapons of war are portrayed; Neutron bombs, laser weapons, electronic devices of all kinds, killing chemical and bacterial gases. There seems to be little hope, at times, for a sane future, or even for a future of any kind here on our globe. As the vice-president of Lockheed Advanced Development Project says it, "We did things ten years ago that you haven't even heard of."[41]

Where Is Christianity?

Meanwhile, where is Christianity, with her mandate to bring all men to Christ? Where is her mandate of place and purpose for lost humanity? Missions researchers tell us that the Gospel is steadily losing ground to Communism, Islamism and other philosophies. At the present rate of attritiion, believers of all descriptions are well in the minority. In another two decades faith in Christ will have become relatively rare. Perhaps Jesus anticipated this state of affairs, with this haunting question:

> "When the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth" (Luke 18:8)?

In our day faith has become puny; a "paper tiger". We have lost our purpose, our unity, our Spirit-empowered capacity to any longer shake up our world for Christ.

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[40]Two of these come to mind: *The Third World War,* by General Sir John Hackett, and *The Devil's Alternative,* by Frederick Forsyth.

[41]Michael E. Long, *They're Redesigning The Airplane, National Geographic,* January, 1981, p. 78

Why is this? Is Christ any less the Savior and Son of God today than He was 2,000 years ago? Is there any less need today for His message of Hope and purpose? Are men today already familiar with His Gospel?

Not at all! Man is no different than he ever was in any of the basics. As always, he is capable of every sin imaginable by the human heart. He is capable of the grossest and bloodiest injustices. And he is just as hopelessly lost, both in a state of sin and vacuum of meaninglessness. Philosopher Francis A. Schaeffer graphically describes the dilemma of modern man in these words:

> ... modern man does in fact assume – wittingly or unwittingly – that the universe and man can be explained by the impersonal plus time plus change. And in this case, man and his aspirations stand in total alienation from what is. And that is precisely where students today live – in a generation of alienation. Alienation ... on every side ... the basic alienation with which they are faced in a cosmic alienation. Simply this: There is nobody there to respond to you. There is nobody home in the universe. There is no one and nothing there to conform to who you are or what you hope.[42]

Fellow Christian, do we not know that God is there, and Christ is there, making intercession for us and longing for the integration of all men into His holy purpose for them? Yes, we know this, but do we heed it? Do we demonstrate it in our own lives and in the daily workings of our congregations? Let us take a careful look at the facts:

Christ and His Word Hardly Known

Today, even considering the increased amount of mission activity going on, as compared to past generations, we are hardly making the Word of the Savior heard in the world He came to redeem from its own folly. Voices of warning such as this one have been raised continually in our generation:

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[42]Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*, p. 15

Too many of us still linger in complacency. We give a token amount of money (perhaps to salve our consciences?), but we shrink from committing ourselves completely to the task before us ... Why do we have this void in our spiritual lives?

Many answers present themsevles. Every analyst has his own list of reasons for this soul-sickness. Yet, one reason stands out like a sore thumb – we lack love.

We talk about "soul-winning", but seldom about "soul-loving". We speak about our duty to win the lost, but little of Christian love to motivate us to teach the lost ... We quote statistics, but we fail to see the realities behind the statistics, because our eyes have not yet been anointed with the eye-salve of love.[43]

No, the redemptive message of Christ is being heard by only a relatively few people in some of the geographical areas of the world. In fact, more than half of the earth's four billion plus inhabitants have access to no form whatever of Christianity! Close to a third of the earth's population is now Chinese by race. How many of the nearly a billion souls of Chinese ancestry are truly following the Lord of all men? There are some 30,000 inhabited islands in the world, some 3,000 separate tribal and language groups, with clans and families by the millions. How many have heard? How many of the millions of earth's present university students have heard the real, genuine, provable, meaningful, workable story of Reintegration in Christ? How many of the world's business executives and government officials know Christ? How many of its poor? How many ... ?

No, they haven't heard! Here in Brazil we must generally begin our teaching of great and humble alike by holding up the Book and stating: "This is a *Bible.* It is God's Book." Because, you see, few have ever owned or even opened a copy of the Scriptures. Even in the great cities of the enlightened United

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[43]Jerry Starling, missionary to New Zealand

States, multitudes have heard little and seem little motivated by what they have heard.

Ta Ethne

In a recent article missionary and motivator of mission work Cline Paden wrote:

> The Greek words "ta ethne", translated "all nations" (in the Great Commission), give us the English word "ethnic", which refers to the various ways people can be classified or grouped ... When the Lord commanded us to go to "ta ethne", He meant for us to preach the Gospel to all the differing groups within the national confines of a sovereign state. In New Guinea, for instance, there are more than 700 ethnic variations ... So it is not enough that we go into each of the nations of the earth ... we must go to every creature, in every ethnic division, in every tribe, in every cultural classification of every homogenous group in the world![44]

Along the same lines, Donald McGavran observed:

> Go, disciple all *ethne* – the tribes, lineages and peoples of earth. This is why church multiplication must be seen as faithfulness. The Church, the churches, and all Christians must faithfully press forward, beseeching men to be reconciled to God, discipling the nations, and leaving the final outcome to God.[45]

Ta ethne – teach all peoples. A great task, indeed! The Wycliffe Bible Translators, specialists in linguistic and cultural groups around the world, list some 3,000 distinct tribal groups on this complex globe of ours. Several years ago, this organization published a book entitled, *Two Thousand Tongues to Go*[46] ... Two thousand language groups which did not have yet available even one passage of Scripture in their own tongue! It is the

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44*Firm Foundation,* November 6, 1973, p. 4

45Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth,* pp. 30, 62

46Ethel Emily Wallis and Mary Angela Bennett, *Two Thousand Tongues To Go*

hope of the Wycliffe people to translate and distribute at least some portions of the New Testament among each of these groups before the end of this century.

Requirement to Teach

But if these dedicated specialists succeed in the noble, indeed monumental, task of providing the Scriptures in two thousand new tongues, will this mean that the *ta ethne* command given by Jesus will have been fulfilled? No, because the Commission has built into it the requirement to teach His Good News person to person and tribe to tribe, until every ethnic group everywhere has heard this message. Wycliffe translators are attempting to provide the sword, and have begged us to follow them to the ends of the earth to convert those who are receiving the written Word for the first time.[47]

But do we have any real concept of the significance and scope of *ta ethne?* Do we have any idea of how many tribes, clans and families call this earth home? Do we realize how many exploding cities of a million, or five, or ten million inhabitants cling to the crust of Mother Earth?

For long centuries, the peoples of this world have walked in darkness. Entire tribes and nations have marched through this darkness, disappearing from human history, without ever seeing the Light. For example, in anthropological source books on Indian tribes in Brazil, multiplied dozens are listed as having died out, to the last known survivor ... without ever hearing the name of Jesus. Let us get on with a long overdue spiritual study of all groupings of mankind, all of the cities, and all of the geographical areas, simultaneously laying plans for reaching them with the message of Salvation.[48]

Can We Fulfill the Task?

Is it really imperative that we go with the Gospel to every

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[47]Several times the writer has heard Wycliffe representatives urge Bible-centered evangelical groups to follow them into these tribes.

[48]Such a study is in progress at the Sunset Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas, as well as among various missions research organizations

creature? Can we accomplish this task that has seldom been fulfilled since New Testament times and the period immediately following? Of course we can, or the Marching Orders would never have been issued by our Lord.

Our task, so facilitated today by rapid communication and sophisticated tools of every description, remains as compelling as ever. Here is what one missionary has to say about the urgency of our task:

> This part of the 20th Century is a time of great stress, of great and rapid change. There is ferment in social and political spheres and now in the church. Yet Christ stands the same, yesterday, today, and forever.
>
> Think of this: three-quarters of the world's people who have ever lived are alive today; a greater part of them being young. Approximately one-third of the world's people live under some form of communistic rule and are loudly informed that paradise is in their own hands here on earth now. Materialism is their philosophy, the State is their god. In most communistic countries, Christian education of youth is forbidden, with the intention that the Church will die out. Do we believe it will? There are signs that God does not. A recent meeting in Taiwan was of missioaries who were planning for the day when God will lead them into mainland China. One of those taking part was a descendant of Hudson Taylor![49]

Every man needs a solid foundation of hope and truth, of demonstrable fact, and of firm purpose, if life in our ripped-off world of today is to make any sense. Where can man find this truth; this direction for his life? Christians know, and knowing, must speak out with all love, boldness and urgency about Christ, our only Hope. This is our all-consuming mission, and one that cannot be placed out on the fringes of our existence, or relegated to others to fulfill.

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[49]H.M. Risson, "The Mission of the Chruch," *The Australian Christian*, August 21, 1971, p. 7

> Missions are not an adjunct to Christianity, but a normal expression of its essential vitality. Jesus defined the work of the apostles in His last commandment (to go and make disciples of all nations). That is our work, too.
>
> This is being Christ, our very life, every moment of it presenting Christ, each of us a missionary ... both as individuals and as a people. Neither the purpose nor the message can be altered without violating the intent of our Lord's command.
>
> Christ created the church to convey the truth; the world needs that truth. Therefore, the Gospel must be preached until the work is finished.[50]

Here in our patio in Brazil we have a plant called *Caminho de Cristo* (Pathway of Christ). It has a cluster of light green, swordlike leaves and out of this cluster spring long runners, terminating in miniature copies of the mother plant. Each new miniature can be cut off and placed in soil, where it takes hold and continues the same process. This is exactly like the nature of Christianity. We are to reproduce our kind, in runners that extend to every land, where new churches will take root and later, begin to send out their own runners.

We have before us in this generation a task that is much more challenging and complex than we would like to admit. However, it is a task of eternal consequences, with eternal guidance promised.[51] Let us get on, then, with this noblest and most compelling of all tasks.

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[50] *ibid.*

[51] Matthew 28:20

CHAPTER 7
SOME TRUE MOTIVES FOR MISSIONS

How can it be that in this enlightened generation we have failed to preach the Gospel to all men? How is it that we have not even initiated the task of evangelism in many lands? Is it because we do not have the resources? No, we Americans are the best educated, wealthiest, most knowledgeable people of all history. We have almost instant command of communication and transportation. We have funds to draw on, beyond the wildest imagination of most people of the world.

Lack of Motivation

Then it must be that we lack motivation. The will of our Lord on the subject of outreach to every creature is well-enough known. But it hasn't moved us to the level of self-sacrificial going and doing demanded by Christ.

This is the bone and marrow of the problem. We hear of a multitude of pressing spiritual needs. We see all about us souls by the thousands plodding their purposeless paths. But we may be only moderately moved to act upon the need. Surely, one of the reasons for a lukewarm response to missions is that we have treated them as a duty based upon a command, whether or not we have any personal sense of burden to fulfill the command and do our part to meet the worldwide need.

Obligation Based Upon Spirit

There is an obligation to share Christ with all creatures, but it rests not so much upon law as upon the Spirit of Christ, upon all that He is and does for man. Allen makes this point:

> So men break, so men have always broken the law, to the grief and disappointment of the priests of the law. We fail to see that the failure is the natural result of the system. We are

often surprised to find that, in doing what we most deplore, men are acting in accordance with the principles which we have inculcated.[52]

Christianity is a spiritual religion, not legalistic. It is essentially, as a result, a missionary religion. In fact, missions outreach is a necessary exercise of the soul, which can be accomplished in no other way. The spirit of Christianity is a worldwide Spirit, embracing all people and all nations. Christ sets no bounds. He is no local deity, but rather, is the Lord of every man. To limit His influence in any part of the world is a contradiction.

Our real motivation must be, then, to reach out our hands to all others in our own world, as Christ stretched out His long ago to every man, as He hung on the cross.

Motivation Difficult to Determine

Motivation is a difficult matter to determine in any human action or reaction. What moves people to respond as they do is a study that becomes more and more profound in our complex world. What moves men to become Christians can also be complicated, especially as one attempts to teach the Gospel in another culture. We have discovered here in Brazil, for example, that some are more moved by materialistic considerations than by spiritual. So now we are more thorough in our teaching and more cautious than we were earlier about rushing candidates into the baptistry, in an attempt to stimulate true spiritual motivation on the part of those hearing the message.

Noble Motivations

What moves men and congregations to participate in missionary endeavors is also a complex matter. There are some true mission motivations and these ought to be much more thoroughly utilized. Perhaps there are others, but the following we submit as basic, essential motives for a congregation's mission activity:

1. *Every human being has a God-given right to hear the Gos-*

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[52]Roland Allen, *Missionary Principles,* p. 35

pel of Christ, fully presented in his own language. Your writer agrees with the oft-quoted statement: "Every man has more right to hear the Gospel once than any man has to hear it twice."[53] But to this must be added the qualification that this one presentation of the Gospel must be adequate – clear, concise and understandable in the language and socio-economic situation in which it is being explained. We American Christians have no more inherent worth or rights than any other human soul. Our great blessing in this Twentieth Century world is that we have inherited an invaluable treasure, the message of Christ, delivered to us by others. This we neither earned nor deserved. Both this treasure, and our total accumulated wealth as the richest "middle class" people of all times, places us under an explicit obligation to share what we have and are with all men. Our Lord does not desire to destroy eternally any soul, for He loves all men.[54] If one single human being arrives before the Judgment Throne without having ever heard of salvation in Christ, think of how he will feel on that day. Think of how we who know Jesus will feel.[55]

2. We as Christians are debtors to *every man.* Paul acknowledged his spiritual obligation to all, and in so doing, clearly presented our obligation also.[56] Without Christ, we are nothing! The only manner in which we can even begin to repay Christ for our salvation is to share Him. Our gratitude can generally be measured by the results it produces in the lives of others. If we feel joy and relief from our burdens in Jesus, we will want to express this to others, and especially to those who have never experienced what we have, over and over again. Are we really grateful to our Lord, if we repay our debt to Him in no more than a token way? Or, if we say to those in all parts of the world who are groping in spiritual blindness, "Peace, friend, be warmed and filled," without explaining how to find that peace? There is no escape for us. We owe a formidable debt to every human being. How well are we repaying it?

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[53]Coined by missionary motivator, writer and editor, James L. Lovell

[54]II Peter 3:9

[55]Ezekial 3:17–19

[56]Romans 1:14

3. *If we are members of the true Body of Christ, we must bear the burden of teaching every one of the four billion human beings now living, and all who may live during our lifetime.* This is a continuing task, for every generation of Christians.

4. *Missions are mandatory, not optional, for every congregation, rich or poor, with two members or two thousand.* Even a congregation just getting started should become involved just as soon as possible in outreach in other areas, if for no other reason, than to establish from the beginning an unselfish, concerned attitude among her members for those beyond her own community. For this reason, young congregations here in Belo Horizonte, even though yet very limited in financial ability, have already given time and resources to missions in our city, our state, in distant regions of Brazil and as far away as Lisbon, Portugal.

5. *Missions are permanent.* There can be no, "Well, we've done our part. Let someone else care for that work for awhile." No congregation has done all of her part, until every creature is thoroughly exposed to the Gospel and until resulting congregations are able to grow and reproduce themselves in other growing congregations. Missions are more than just baptizing a few souls and planting a congregation in some distant outpost. How often a church has given birth to a new work in some other area, and then abandoned it, to survive as best it could. In military terms, the beachhead must be secured, and then the next target area, and the next, penetrated and secured also. This is a long, often frustrating battle, but once launched, cannot be abandoned, until the entire area liberated for Christ is strong enough to also join in the attack.

6. *Missions are universal, not regional.* The attitude that is too often expressed is concern only for evangelism in those areas that are nearby to us geographically, may not be true missionary motivation, but rather a form of provincialism. If men live on a remote Pacific Island, or in Antaractic wastes, we are obligated spiritually to them, as well as to those in our nation. Or, if later they dwell permanently on the moon or Mars, our message must reach that far also.

7. *Missions are personal, at both the going end and the receiving end.* No man should expect to hire someone else to do his own soul-reaching for him, whether it be in his own community or elsewhere. All Christians must be goers to their own world with the Word.[57] Missions are personal. They are primarily concerned with saving individual souls and planting individual congregations. Churches wrapped up in "institutional" programs that take up all of their time and resources may accomplish good, but fail utterly in their basic task.

8. *Finally, missions are urgent.* We must be about our Father's business promptly, with all deliberate haste. Every day of delay sends many thousand more off the stage of life without ever having heard. Every day sees tens of thousands more reaching youth and adulthood, totally ignorant of their true spiritual options. One of the greatest frustrations we face on the field is that of the utter slowness of men to hear, respond and grow in the faith, when we see so graphically the "need for speed" in reaching the masses of people all about us, as they jostle each other by the millions on the sidewalks of our great cities.

Reluctance and procrastination in fulfilling our mission to all men must be nearly unforgiveable in God's eyes. How heartsick we become here on the field when we hear of a congregation cancelling or postponing a needed missionary thrust in order to construct better buildings for herself or carpet her preacher's home! Such a group is truly "majoring in minors". She needs to take another long, prayerful look at her purpose for existing, as defined in the New Testament.

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[57]See Acts 8:4

CHAPTER 8
SOME FALSE MOTIVES FOR MISSIONS

Unfortunately, "majoring in minors" appears to be the theme song of many congregations. We mean by this that their priorities are confused, with emphasis shifting away from the real basics to perhaps necessary, but second-level, activities. This tendency among us was presented by an editorial cartoonist with humorous but sobering insight. He illustrated a richly-brocaded church leader offering a rather skimpy bag of coins to the Apostle Paul with the explanation: "I know it's not much for your Jerusalem collection, but we've just paved our chariot lot."[58] Wasn't this the tragic error of the Pharisees of Jesus' time? They were scrupulous about details, but oblivious to the weightier matters – justice, mercy, faith.[59] Or Martha, the classic prototype of all whose preoccupation with physical and material details blinds them to the true eternal values.[60]

Missions Impossible Approach

This same shift of emphasis away from eternal essentials occurs in the mission program, or lack of it, in a congregation. So very many local churches engage in limited outreach beyond their own communities (and often little at home, also), because time and resources are spent on matters of relatively minor importance – housekeeping chores, local finances, social engagements and the like – while multitudes of human souls remain in spiritual darkness for want of the Light of the World! This is energy dissipation of the most serious kind. The potential is there, but is short-circuited, and so is never concentrated on the real issues before us. A significant missions thrust remains impossible in such conditions.

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[58] *Christian Chronicle*, January 25, 1971, p. 2
[59] Matthew 23:23
[60] Luke 10:38–42

Game-of-Chance Approach

Other congregations select mission projects lightly, at random, almost as if this were a game of chance. Of the many appeals that fall their way, one or two tickle the fancy of the missions committee or the eldership, or perhaps is the pet project of an influential member, and so, "luckily", someone receives financial aid for a year or two of mission effort. Others enter mission outreach experimentally. If the "program" succeeds quickly and splendidly, after a year or two of trial run, then all is well. But if not ... After all, we Americans are programmed to instant success. We have little patience for a slow generation-long mission, because it doesn't bring much favorable publicity to the sponsoring church.

Mathematical Formula Approach

Some enter mission efforts as they would a business venture. They look on church planting and soul reaching as a formula: "X work plus X money = mission results." To be sure, all of us involved should be business-like in our approach to missions. We should encourage agreements that are set down on paper, so that all may refresh memories on what really was decided. We should encourage carefully defined responsibilities for all concerned. We should insist on prompt meeting of financial and moral commitments in missionary endeavors. Too often, support checks are weeks late being deposited, causing irreparable damage to the reputation of the person being supported and to his budget. However, we should never lose sight of the very human fact that saving souls and starting congregations, especially in another culture, cannot be reduced to neat formulas on paper.

High Pressure Approach

Some churches approach missions under pressure. After all, a certain amount of mission effort is necessary to be decent, to have a "well-rounded, appealing" program, to keep up with the Jones's congregation, or to relieve pressure from an overly-insistent membership, missionary, or his friends. How often missions decisions are based on personal influence! "Brother Joe" calls the preacher or an elder and announces that he has a pet mission project that ought to receive special attention – as a personal favor to him. So if Joe carries significant weight with

the elders, if he is well-known figure in the church, a friend or relative of an elder, or a generous contributor, his appeal is heeded. But is the individual merit of the program considered, independently of pressures or friendships? Is it accepted on the basis of the spiritual need and receptivity of a particular area? And what happens to that project, if the source of the motivation is removed (departure of the person who arranged the support, or his becoming out of favor with the congregation)? The chances are that interest in it sours, because its motivational basis was inadequate from the start.

Old Maid Approach

And some, regrettable, resist all mission appeals, ignoring many of them totally, and accepting others only hesitantly, after much persuasion. Leaders of such churches at times take pride in"protecting the flock from missionary on-slaughts", as if the resources of the congregation really belonged to them, rather than to Christ. With such an attitude, they might be compared to a reluctant old maid driving away all of her potential blessings, in an effort to protect herself from the potential risks involved in courtship and marriage.

None of these is at all a valid or basic reason for missionary endeavor. Our real business as Christians is to reflect the Light, to illuminate the hearts of all men with the Gospel, out of gratitude for our own salvation and concern for their spiritual condition. Let us make our Father's business the top priority in our lives and congregations, for truly spiritual reasons. Let us be moved by our Lord's own Spirit to share Heaven's light with our darkness-plagued world.

CHAPTER 9
MOVING A CHURCH TO HER MISSION

> The sense of mission which characterized growing churches of Latin America is particularly marked among the growing Pentecostal churches. Without exception, they believe that their message is exactly what men need. *Christus Victor* is the Savior they present![61]

Who should be more vibrant in their message and more urgent in their mission than we who claim membership in the Body of Christ? Unfortunately, our zeal for souls, worldwide, falls far short of the fervor seen in some evangelical bodies. Example: The Assembly of God, largest evangelical church in Brazil, has grown in that country from about 100,000 in 1950 to about 3,000,000 in 1981, an increase of more than 500%. To be sure, we can not be inclined to use some of that group's methods, but we can at least emulate her missionary zeal.

Penetrating Fervor

For this kind of missionary fervor to motivate a congregation (where it has to occur, in our pattern of local autonomy),[62] it must penetrate all levels. Many concerned Christians have proposed new mission outreach, only to be doused with cold water by the church's leadership. In my experience many even worthwhile mission projects have been received cautiously or negatively by local congregations, and if accepted, are approved only with considerable reluctance.[63]

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[61] Monterroso, Victor. *Latin American Evangelist,* May-June, 1968

[62] Churches of Christ have no central headquarters nor mission boards. Mission outreach must, therefore, be channeled through local churches

[63] See chapter 4

Our local leadership (elders, deacons, ministers, Bible teachers) must first be set on fire by the message of Christ the Victorious. It is a sad commentary on our leadership that hardly a missionary in a survey taken at Harding University[64] had been primarily motivated by his own local elders to devote his life to missionary service! Local church leaders must come to know the spiritual need of the world, preferably first-hand, and must act unitedly and forcefully on that need. Some elders are scheduling regular visits to actual and potential mission fields. Some are studying the principles of successful mission work and church growth. But the number of such well informed local bishops is still extremely limited. Based on their limited exposure to the field, how can elders plan an intelligent, all-out missionary thrust?

Some Questions For Elders

Why are not elders moving out to mission areas, at least for short periods of on-the-field service? Why are they not searching our families and individuals in the congregation who show dedication, aptitude for soul-winning and adaptability to new situations and languages? Why do local church leaders often sit by passively, simply reacting to mission opportunities that are thrust upon them, rather than seeking out open doors for evangelism? Thankfully, some congregations are now functioning along these latter lines, but they are altogether too few.

Grassroots Motivation

However, it isn't enough for the elders, or ministers, to be committed wholly to this great, conquering mission. Motivation must reach down through the deacons, teachers, members and even little children of the congregation. Communist China boasts that to ensure development of a good Red Guard, the government prepares him from birth to think and act like a militant warrior for communism, Chinese variety. Anything less than such preparation is inadequate for soldiers of the Cross. Ponder this statement, reader:

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[64]Taken by Harding University Mission/Prepare research committee in 1968–69. A total of 288 missionaries was interviewed

It may be that we will need to spend a generation preparing our people to go. We need a long exposure to Biblical concepts produced through intensive investigation of this subject. We need to begin in the card class and continue into the auditorium class. How else can we get the Great Commission and its inherent meaning across to our people? We have to get within the context of a subject to imbibe its spirit and purpose, so as to bear its fruit.[65]

When they are asked about their future profession, spiritually-motivated children and youth in our congregations should be answering, "I want to be a frontline warrior for Jesus." But what *are* they answering to such a question?

Use All Possible Channels

Preach on missions, yes, elders and ministers, but also utilize every possible means to stimulate mission-mindedness in the membership. Expose the flock to missionaries. They won't bite (much), but they *will* move some of their listeners to greater concern for the lost. Missionaries indicated in the Harding Survey that their greatest motivating influence to enter the field came from other missionaries. Schedule mission workshops, then, with working missionaries, and attend those presented by other congregations and by Christian colleges. Study missions in the local church, giving perhaps a quarter or unit of material each year to this and related topics at every level in the congregation.

A church in San Fernando, California has a mission research hour each Sunday afternoon for interested members. They not only study, but also pray for missionaries, mission efforts, new workers to reap the harvest and for the lost, that they might hear the Gospel. Will such concentration of research and prayer pay off in eternal dividends? Decidedly!

Support missionaries. By this, we mean much more than just financially, which is the most impersonal, inexpensive kind of

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[65]Cline Paden, "Ta Ethne", *Firm Foundation*, November 6, 1973

mission participation. Become involved in the lives of missionaries and fellow Christians all over the world. Some specific means of doing this will be considered in later chapters.

Be Out Front

But remember, elders and ministers, be out front in the mission of the congregation. Armchair generalship has little place in this personal, "gut-level" task of sharing Christ with all men. Move your congregation into her own dynamic mission. Reverse the "normal" tendency of 10% for missions and 90% for maintaining the "local" work. Think what a difference it would make, locally and internationally, if 90% of the church's interest were focused on reaching souls in other areas of the world. The 10% left for the local family would dramatically multiply, due to greatly increased motivation on the part of the members.

CHAPTER 10
SORTING OUT OUR MISSION LOYALTIES

"Brother Jones, we know that all of you are doing a fine work in Banga-Banga, but frankly, our interest here at Higher Heights is in Brother Brown's work there. We think it would be a conflict of interests for you to report here also. Besides, we wouldn't be able to help you. We're already sending $50 a month to him, and that's the absolute limit of our budget for Banga-Banga."

"But Sir, I'm not asking for money. I'm only trying to inform the supporting churches on the over-all progress there."

"We appreciate that, but think you'd better not come. It would just be a waste of time ..."

This fictitious telephone converstation is not so fictitious. It has really happened to missionaries, even when they had no other motive than to inform. Such play-games over missions bring up the whole area of missionary loyalties and priorities.

Our Purpose in Missions

What, after all, are our purpose in missions? What are our priorities? Where lie our basic loyalties? It sometimes appears that many congregations and individuals have a warped sense of mission loyalties.

For example, churches generally build interest in missions by emphasizing either a worker or a country. If their loyalty is based on a particular man, severe consequences may come of this. For one thing, they may trust so much in him that if he fails in any way, their confidence in missions in general is shattered. For another, they may place all of their mission eggs in

his basket, so to speak, and ignore all other baskets. Or, as suggested at the outset of this chapter, they may close their eyes and ears to the entire effort in his area, out of an inflated sense of loyalty to just one man there. In their undivided attention to him, some have even demonstrated an almost total lack of interest in converts, churches, needs, or anything else in that nation, unless their man was directly involved. If, for some reason, he is not sufficiently played up in newsletters from his field, they lose all interest in these reports. Or, if he returns home permanently, they immediately cease all support for that field. Of course, churches, we should be loyal to the families we send to the field, praying for them and supporting their work in every possible way. But we must beware of a possessive, narrow loyalty to just one of the Lord's workers.

On the other hand, some have concentrated all of their attention over the years on just one field, which is not necessarily bad in itself. However, such a concentration of effort becomes unhealthy when that particular region becomes the *only place* for a congregation's region outreach. Loyalty to one area is a natural development of long contact with that work, but overemphasized, it becomes a form of congregational egocentrism (all wrapped up in self and in self's extension on the mission field, which can make a pretty small package).

Finally, some churches have chosen only those fields that are less difficult, or within easy driving distance from home. Apparently, they are more interested in their own convenience than in reaching mankind in depth around the world.

The True Priorities

Well, then, what are the true mission priorities, if not principally to the man sent and to his field? From higher to lower, our priorities should read something like this:

1. *To Christ.* Colossians, Chapter 1, gives us a glimpse of the true majesty and sovereignty of our Lord – all things were made by Him and for Him; He is before all things and above all things, the Head of His body, the Church. Christ is first in everything, by the will of God. Christ is the real priority of missions; the real motivating force behind our going and sending.

We go because He came. Any other loyalty placed above Him or equal to Him is misplaced.

2. *To the Word.* Many place works of social reform and benevolence high on the list of mission priorities. However, such projects, if not based firmly on the Word and for the glory of Christ, function largely in darkness, because only the Word is a "lamp to our pathway and a light to our feet". The message of Christ is of supreme priority, even above acts of benevolence, in our world so desperately devoid of spiritual light.

3. *To the Lost.* This is obvious, if we take Christ and His Word seriously. Certinaly, we should help feed the hungry and clothe the naked. But in the longer view, physical bread is of very short-term value, if not accompanied by the Bread that gives permanent satisfaction to the soul. If we fill a starving man's belly, which we should, but fail to fill him with the Bread of Life, he will be hungry again the next day, with little hope of a permanent solution for his greater hunger!

4. *To our missionary task.* This is the natural outcome of giving high priority to all of the world's lost. Hopeless souls without Christ call for diligent, even extreme measures to reach them.

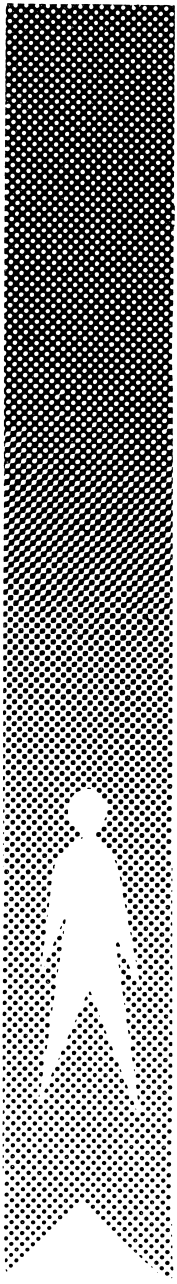
5. *To the missionary and the field.* The need and its fulfillment should be major considerations, above the man and even above our own preferences as to a field. As already pointed out, if either he or his locale of service becomes of primary importance, our missionary fortunes ride too heavily on purely human factors.

6. *To new Christians and churches on the field.* The Apostle Paul never abandoned the churches he launched. Can the same be said for the congregation we have initiated in other lands? Whether "our man" goes or comes, we owe spiritual nourishment to those won through his efforts. One great fear new converts have in scattered fields is that later they will be abandoned by their "fathers in the faith". Surely, they have reason for concern, because countless fledgling churches and members have

been orphaned in their spiritual infancy, on the whim of some individual worker or of some congregation at home, which suddenly decided to shift her efforts to some other field.

Productive, Continuing Word

Mission priorities properly placed will create far more productive, continuing work around the world than has often been true in the past. Mission priorities, if they are well-balanced, will ensure that the man or his project do not run ahead of or behind the more urgent priorities of Christ, the Word, and the stark fact that without Christ, the world is lost. Correct priorities will avoid the misplaced loyalties so often seen in the past – to an unproductive worker, to a field that should have become self-sustaining a generation or two ago, or to our own local work, at the expense of the world's unreached. Let us preach Christ and His salvation to every man, giving this task top priority in every church's program and every Christian's life.



Part IV
SOME DRAGONS (AND ANGELS) ON THE MISSIONS TRAIL

" ... I have been in danger from floods and from robbers, in danger from fellow Jews and from Gentiles, there have been dangers in the cities, dangers in the wilds, dangers on the high seas, and dangers from false friends ..." (II Corinthians 11:26, TEV)

"I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (II Corinthians 12:10, TEV).

CHAPTER 11
THE DRAGON OF MISSIONS-IN-A-BOX

The mission our Savior left for us is worldwide in scope and eternal in time. It includes every resident of every city, every citizen of every country, every member of every tribe and family and every communicant of every religion. It includes every generation, from the time of His death on the cross to the day of His triumphant return. The implications of Chirst's mission reach beyond our earthly dimensions of time and space, involving human beings in the one absolute dimension of Eternity.

Vision and Dedication Required

To fulfill our mission, as left for us by Christ, requires extraordinary vision and dedication. It is a mission for alert, self-sacrificing Christians, not followers "afar off" and certainly not watered-down, self-satisfied saints.

Unfortunately, however, many individuals and congregations pervert the mission left us by our Lord, turning it inward on themselves, or even ignoring it entirely. They erect barriers of self-interest, to hinder at every hand *the* mission of the church.

In his book, *Your God Is Too Small,* J.B. Phillips discusses those whose concept of Jehovah is restricted to their own limited view of the world. Phillips calls this the God-In-A-Box syndrome – forcing the Lord of all creation to fit within limits of their own making.[66] The same phenomenon oftens occurs in the mission program of the church. In determining their evangelistic outreach, or lack of it, the dangerous dragon that many congregations face is one of Missions-In-A-Box. That is, they set arbitrary limits to their outreach, considering how much is

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66J.B. Phillips, *Your God Is Too Small,* pp. 37ff

needed for local housekeeping and how little they can decently get by with in the task of spreading the Gospel. But reader, since Jesus gave all of us, all, that is, except a fence to limit the extent of our sharing His message worldwide, just how much or how little is our "fair share" in the task of responding to His gift? Who is able to place a price tag on the value of souls in every land?[67]

Content With Modest Efforts

Because of such self-imposed limits on our task, we become content with modest efforts and results, both at home and abroad – a comparative handful of baptisms per year, limited "inreach" to our own communities, and token assistance in some overseas missionary program. We feel that we are doing our "reasonable" duty, and so we neatly tie up our mission program in a box designed to fit our limited human standards.

Missions On A Globe

Instead of Missions-In-A-Box, we ought to be thinking continually of Missions-On-A-Globe, unlimited by geographical, political, national or racial fences.

So often our emphasis is really the Great Commission in reverse. When I was a child on the farm in Oregon, I could hardly wait to finish hoeing that row of corn, because shade and water awaited me at the end of the row. I discovered along the way that sharpening my hoe in the shade could prolong my rest for another ten minutes. So I wound up with the sharpest possible hoe and the fewest possible rows hoed. How many millions of man-hours are spent in congregations on sharpening the hoes of the members and how few on actual hoeing! The Great Commission tells us to make disciples worldwide and to teach them to observe all of Christ's instructions. But by our actions, we reverse the Commission to read, "Teach the local members, week after week, and year after year, and afterward, send someone out to the lost, if we have time and resources left over." So the bulk of our attention (and expenditure) is devoted to local hoe sharpening, rather than out where the real weeds are.

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[67]Matthew 16:26

Resources Unlimited

However, some may object, "We must teach the members here and also keep within our budget. We have only so many resources." Resources? Is there any limit to our resources, if we are serving God in faith? According to Psalm 50:10 and Ephesians 3:20–21, we have *resources unlimited* at our disposal, as God's sons and daughters. Regarding teaching the local members, is it possible that we become guilty of the sin of "ever learning, and never coming to a knowledge of the truth"?[68]

Christian people need a solid doctrinal foundation, to be sure. And, as we shall see later, God's workers must be prepared for their task. At the same time, however, we must quit being only "professional students" of the Word and begin to put into practice what we have learned, both at home and abroad.

Breaking Out of the Box

In an effort to help us break out of the Missions-In-A-Box syndrome, here are some questions to ponder:

1. *How many members of the congregation should be missionaries?* All of them, according to their ability and the extent of their own particular world of influence!

2. *How many should be sent out by the congregation to engage in missions elsewhere?* Before you answer, consider these figures: Adventist churches send out one missionary normally for every fifty members. On this basis, a thousand members could sustain at least twenty full-time workers. The People's Church in Toronto, Canada, with 2,000 members, at one time was sponsoring a total of 269 different missionaries, for a percentage of one worker for every ten local members. Among churches in general, however, the percentage tends to be several hundred local members for each missionary sent!

3. *Should the congregation be encouraging her members to go to other lands with the lifesaving message? Should the elders,*

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[68] II Timothy 3:7

teachers, and parents be encouraging children, youth and college students to give their lives fully to Christian missions?

These are serious questions, requiring carefully mediated answers. Many more could be added here, but these may suffice to set us to thinking about the relative dimensions of our missionary commitment.

It is a well-known tale that a goldfish grows in proportion to its physical environment. In like manner, if we limit God's power and resources for the fulfillment of our mission, then we will experience limited growth locally and, of course, our congregations will be stunted in their missionary fulfillment. Let us dismantle our Missions-In-A-Box complex. Let us slay this dragon that causes us to shrink from our worldwide task.

CHAPTER 12
THE DRAGON OF PROVINCIALISM

Among the deadly dragons that threaten evangelism of the earth's four billion inhabitants, one that often rears its ugly head is that of *provincialism.* A real monster that refuses to die, provincialism lurks in most congregations throughout the country, breathing out an endless stream of smoke that obscures and defeats missionary endeavor.

In what forms does provincialism generally appear? In the guise of ignorance of all other areas than one's own, indifference to the spiritual needs and opportunities that exist in other parts of the world, satisfied exclusiveness or isolationism that precludes either interest in or commitment to other peoples, and a deepseated desire to remain "big fish in a little pond".

American Provincialism

On the first point, few educated men in the world are more ignorant of other lands or people than we Americans. One thing we find as longtime residents of Brazil is that most of her high school and college students know much more about our country than we know about theirs. They also know two or three languages and something of the nature of those who speak these languages. On the other hand, we Americans often show to the world an appalling lack of information about and sensitivity toward other cultures. Not only this, many of us are content to remain ignorant of other peoples. Perhaps it is a case of "what we do not know will not obligate us". However, as with the law, ignorance is no excuse, especially in this age of instant information and travel. Because we are not aware of a nation of millions of souls, does this mean that we have relieved ourselves of obligation to them?

Jonah took the escapist route of provincialism in an attempt to escape his missionary responsibility to the great foreign

capital of Nineveh. But as he himself recorded for all time, his escape was shortlived. He still had to face the Assyrian dragons in their own lair. But even when he preached fire and brimstone to the Ninevites, his provincial attitude showed through: He did not at all want to see them saved. For Jonah was a "good" Israelite, who had misapplied God's injunction to remain separate from all other nations.[69] Nineveh was heathen, and therefore "less than human"; unworthy of serious consideration by the Faithful. The Lord showed him on that hot, barren hillside outside of Nineveh, that he loved her citizens also and wished to see them saved.

From Ignorance to Isolationism

Indifference to the plight of others is closely related to ignorance of their existence. With apologies to the Apostle Paul, "Why should they bother calling on him with the Gospel of whom they have not heard?" Ignorance in such a case is bliss. However, relief is only temporary. The individual and the congregation may well be spared much effort, expense, involvement and heartache, by ignoring missions, but at enormous cost to themselves in the end. As the Lord indicated to Ezekiel[70], they may esacpe their obligations to the lost now, but what of the Judgment, when they will have to receive in their own hands the blood of every man who did not hear the message of salvation, due to their indifference?

It is a small step indeed from indifference to complacency and isolationism. In the realm of soul-reaching the old prayer, "Bless me, my wife, my son John and his wife; us four and no more", is spiritual suicide. And yet it occurs so tragically often. Countless churches and individual members are totally uncommitted to their worldwide mission to the lost. Not only this, they are impervious to information and appeals on behalf of

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[69]See also such passages as Isaiah 55:5, which indicate Israel's greater universal task of summoning other nations to faith in God. For an enlargement of this missionary theme in the Old Testament, see the author's book, *Fire In My Bones*, Edmund F. Cook's little volume, *The Missionary Message of the Bible*, and Richard R. De Ridder's book, *Discipling the Nations*.

[70]Ezekiel 3:17–21

those who have never heard of the Savior. Some elders fear participation in something bigger than they or something removed by distance, especially if they are untravelled and uninformed about the world in general. Some preachers freeze out missionaries, apparently in an effort to "protect the flock" or to avoid sharing the pulpit with others. An old saying aptly fits such cases: "When the tide is out, every little shrimp has his own pond."

How many church leaders actually treat missions coldly and thus force those engaged in missions to go to even greater effort and expense to attract their attention, hopefully to gain a little begrudged support! And how many are so isolated mentally and spiritually, as well as geographically, that they become myopic – unable to see beyond their own city or county. This disease afflicts the leaders and eventually is transmitted into the ranks of their fellows. Any missionary can tell how appallingly uninformed their brethren are about other lands and cultures of the world, about mission methods, and about the progress of the Kingdom. How often we find ourselves reporting to the blind and deaf, rather than to alert, visionary brethren.

The Important Question

The important question is not that provincialism exists in congregations, because it is found to some degree everywhere. The question is, how to recognize this deadly dragon and put him to death. Our Lord advised the church in Laodicea:

> I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed ... and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Revelation 3:18 KJV).

We, like Laodicea, need to anoint our collective eyes with the salve of clear vision – about the peoples of this world and their spiritual needs, and about receptive areas as they develop. We need to awaken to our self-centered spiritual nakedness and reclothe ourselves in the robes of missionary conquest. Our purpose for being is not creature comfort, but *creatures comforted in Christ.* Each Christian and congregation is saved to save, and

the Lord recognizes no fences of race or geography. Only by knowledgeable and dedicated effort can we slay the dragon of provincialism. It is no easy task to do away with him. Olympic runners may have logged 5,000 miles in training for one supreme moment, giving themselves totally to their goal, and even suffering severe physical pain and emotional stress in the process. They willingly buffet themselves, because they have their eyes on that gold medal. Dare we show less vision and dedication than this in the far more pressing race for the souls of men?[71] They are found by the millions in far-off cities – Rome, Calcutta, Peking, Buenos Aires, Lourenco Marques, Lisbon, Madrid, Moscow ... But with provincialism at last dead, these cities will no longer be far off in our thinking. They will become our sister cities, the homes of our God-created brothers who need so urgently what we have in our hearts to share.

[71] I Corinthians 9:24–27

CHAPTER 13
THE DRAGON OF MATERIALISM

Materialism is a unique dragon, when it comes to devouring Christian's desire to sacrifice themselves for their Master's mission. This one might be called a household dragon – so domesticated that we are hardly aware of his danger, or even of his presence.

Missionary and missions educator Wendell Broom observed that what was considered a luxury a generation ago is now a necessity. This is certainly the case, as witness the mass change-over from black and white to color television; from no family boat to a modest outboard, and then on to more and more powerful craft; from one family car to perhaps three or four; or from a moderate, but comfortable, home to a larger, more prestigious dwelling. These are only a few of the indications that our household dragon of materialism is still with us and is being gorged daily upon our hard-earned bread. Christians no longer seem to recognize that many of our "necessities" are not at all essential to life and happiness, nor that a Christian could well afford to be without many of them for the good of the cause of Christ in the world. We seem compelled by social pressure to purchase that better home, to obtain that new model car, and to improve our general comfort level, not realizing that in doing so, we are snuggling into the very lap of the dragon of materialism.

At the Dragon's Mercy

All of this, and much more, places us in such obligations to this monster that we are at his mercy with costly time payments, stretching out for perhaps twenty or thirty years, as well as with constantly increasing pressure on us to conform to the world.

But granted that this is true, what does it have to do with the

Lord's Kingdom and the Christian life, or more specifically, with missions? Much, in every way! For example, it requires considerable financial meat to feed the dragon of materialism. And his appetite, insatiable, constantly increases. So the Christian caught up in the materialistic life finds himself at its mercy and unable to give abundantly to the Lord. Nor can he give much time, because his life is centered on concerns of this present world – pro games on TV, weekend excursions to the lake (to justify the cost of his camper and cruiser), and all of the rest. Run your own research test, reader, to see if this is not true. Listen for a few weeks to the after-worship topics of discussion among the members. Are they about reaching souls for Christ, or about material and social interests?

Dulled Concern

Furthermore, materialsm dulls his concern for the highest values and the noblest levels of Christian service. How can he understand what it means to present his body a living sacrifice, when life is really so comfortable for him that he requires his own individual cross to be padded and upholstered.[72] When an appeal comes along to leave all of this behind, for a little of relative self-sacrifice as a soldier for Jesus on some foreign battlefield, even the appeal itself sounds like a foreign language to him. He can no longer discern such spiritual things, nor can he even be expected to in his situation.

Captured Congregations

Entire congregations can be caught in this dragon's den, just as individual members are captured by him. One former missionary and student of cultures stated recently that almost all of the leading protestant groups (along with the congregation of which he was a member) were essentially alike in attitude and behavior. All were entrapped in this dragon's snare, and as a result, few could even comprehend what genuine, total self-denial was all about. One long-time church member even asserted that he had known but one truly sacrificial Christian family in more than forty years of observation!

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[72]Romans 12:1–2; II Timothy 2:3–5

What is the favorite strategy of the dragon of materialsim, as he goes about devouring local congregations? He convinces them to place their emphasis on expensive, always larger and more comfortable meeting places, padded pews, all of the latest conveniences, and along with this, an almost total lack of emphasis on the real mission of the church. "Mission" is relegated to a committee, on the assumption that it is merely one small facet of many in the church's program. So this all-consuming reason for the church's being receives a modest percentage of the budget and attention, while the bulk of the contributions go toward servicing and pampering the local flock. The saints therefore come to see the church as a special kind of club existing for their comfort and convenience.[73] Because of their material orientation, wouldn't the members be shocked if the elders seriously proposed giving, say, a third of their income to the Lord, with most of this third to be used for soul-reaching and church-planting elsewhere in the world?

The Problem Goes Deeper

But the matter of mission vs. materialism goes deeper than this. Every Christian must be a missionary, serving with all of his heart wherever he is and giving himself to the supreme task of sharing Christ with others. The only way in which this kind of dedication will ever prevail is for each disciple to slay the dragon of materialism and remove its carcass from his life. This will be a painful process (slaying dragons always is!), requiring a new attitude that is exactly counter to our culture and daily life style. It will demand a complete re-examination of our basic values. But until such a step is taken, the principles of "living sacrifice", "self denial", and "taking up our cross daily", so totally foreign to present-day thinking, will never gain their proper and Biblical place in our lives. Nor will we ever make the truly *great* Commission of Christ our marching orders.

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[73] I am reminded, in this context, of the famous story of the Lifesaving Station, built along a dangerous coastline, and how it slowly changed from a rustic but effective rescue entity to an expensive, exclusive club, which finally lost all knowledge of how to save shipwrecked souls. See also *Disciple*, by Juan Carlos Ortiz, which considers this problem among Christians.

The sooner this dragon is dead, the sooner we will leave our "fur-lined fox holes" and strip the vinyl padding off our crosses, to share wholeheartedly in our real purpose for being as Christians. May the day soon come in our lives when we can shout, "The dragon is dead; long live the King!"

CHAPTER 14
THE DRAGON OF OPTIONAL MISSIONS

According to missionary-professor Dr. George Gurganus,[74] several deep-seated heresies are prevalent in the church today in regard to missions. Two of these are:

1. Missions are optional. We must take care of our local congregation and her needs first.

2. If we can't go into missionary work personally, we can send someone else, to take our place.

The Word gives us dramatic examples of men who were reluctant to accept the mission to which God had called them, thinking erroneously that they had a choice of fulfilling it or not, or that they were not in a position at the moment to fulfill it. Hear Moses: "But Lord, I'm not fluent enough!" Gideon: "Why, I'm the least of my father's family and it is really a 'nothing' family." Isaiah: "Woe is me. I have unclean lips. I'm not worthy to go." Jeremiah: "But I'm only a child, Lord." Jonah: "Not me, God. I'm not about to go to Nineveh to preach your Word. That's east, so I'm heading West."

The Same Excuses

In today's world, when missions are mentioned, many individuals and churches attempt to relieve themselves of responsibility in the matter, with excuses such as these: "We're going to construct a new meeting place, so our mission work will have to be suspended for awhile." "We're not meeting our budget. Sorry ..." "Brother Paul, we would like to help you with that collection for the poor in Judea, but right now we're paving our

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[74]Former missionary to Japan, professor of missions and retired director of the Mission Center at Abilene Christian College, Abilene, Texas

chariot lot." "I would go, but I have too many financial (or family) obligations at home." "Who me? I'm not the missionary type."

Such responses to the call of Christ to share His Good News with every creature indicate that the dragon of "optional missions" is very much alive and continues to becloud the real issues with his own deceptive fog of excuses. Surrounded by this dense vapor, entire congregations sit back, deluded that they are functioning as New Testament churches.

Missions Not Optional

However, missions are not now, nor have they ever been, an option to the Lord's people. There are only about three basic characteristics of the New Testament Church. One of these is her total obedience to the authority of Christ, as indicated in Matthew 28:18 and Romans 6:17. The second is her degree of love for the brethren, and for all men, according to John 13:36, Mark 12:33 and I John 4:7. And the third is how well she fulfills her mission, as taught in Philippians 2:9–11.

J. Allan Ranck suggests in this regard:

> We see that, because it has one Lord, the church is one. It thereby has one mission, one purpose for its existence. That mission is to make Jesus Christ known to the world and to accomplish the mission that Jesus himself came to achieve.[75]

Cook reinforces this mandate with the following statement:

> ... the world mission of witnessing to Christ among all people is the *one great charge* that the Savior gave to His church after His resurrection. Apart from worship, the church really exists for just two purposes: witnessing and fellowship. We emphasize the second but all too often forget the first.[76]

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[75]J. Allen Ranck, *Education for Christian Missions* p. 3
[76]Harold R. Cook, *op.cit.*, p.73

The Mission of The Church

What is the mission of the church? It is an extension of the mission which Christ gave to the Apostles, and which was transmitted to faithful men throughout each generation (II Timothy 2:2). Cook goes on to declare:

> (This mission) includes all of His disciples; not one is omitted from its scope. The Christian who fails to bear witness to his Savior is disobedient to this call, which is meant for him ... It is not a question of home missions or foreign missions, of city missions or missions on the frontier. This is a call to be Christ's ambassadors to lost sinners without regard to the places where they may be found.[77]

Every man is therefore a missionary ... or a mission. There is no other option. Nor is there an option beyond this for a local church. She is either wholeheartedly missionary, or she is not truly a church of Jesus Christ! Missions is the heart of every congregation, the very life of the church. A church (or individual), therefore, that has lost her missionary fire has lost her life.

Non-Transferrable

We cannot transfer either our individual or group missionary responsibility to others, for this is falling victim to another dragon, the one called "Sending a Substitute in Our Place". We cannot hire someone else to "go" in our place, thus relieving us of all further responsibility, because each of us has his own world of acquaintances to whom to go with the saving message. We must maintain missions at the core of our personal and congregational life, or we will have failed to even see our purpose for being.

Planning missions at the level of a mere department in the church, or an optional project, is sure spiritual death, both for the "saved" and the lost. It is also heresy, because it subverts the major thrust which Jesus intended for His followers.

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[77] *ibid.*, p. 86

CHAPTER 15
SOME OTHER DRAGONS ON THE PATH

All along the trail of missions fierce dragons lurk, serving as Satan's hindrances to realizing our purpose as God's soldiers. Among those not yet mentioned are the "Color-Me-Red" Dragon, the Distraction Dragon, and the dragons of Procrastination, Division, Myopia, Lukewarmness, Cash Caution, Fun and Games, Liberalism, Ultra-Conservatism, Criticism, Social Gospel, Vested Interests, and "I Don't Believe in God or Dragons" dragon. In more detail, these fire-breathers look something like this:

1. *The Color-Me-Red Dragon.* This is the beast that simplifies the task to its absurd minimum, the type that hears of the arrival of a worker in the country of Banga-Banga, and so goes over to his wall map and colors another nation red, to indicate that the Great Commission had been fulfilled there. He not only deludes himself, but leads others also to consider the task accomplished in that land. "One man to a field" is a wholly inadequate means of sharing the Gospel with every creature.

2. *The Distraction Dragon.* This is the creature of secondary activities, one of the frequently encountered dangers along the way to missions. Nehemiah met this dragon when he was tempted to quit the job of wall-building, to have a meeting with the opposition. What was his answer? "We are doing a great work here. Why should we stop it for secondary considerations?"[78] Once a missionary in Southeast Asia was urged by an international firm to leave his mission and accept a high-paying

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[78]Nehemiah, chapter 6

position in industry. He kept refusing, so the company kept adding incentives, in an effort to recruit him. Finally, out of desperation, firm officials asked him, "What is the matter? Isn't our salary offer high enough?" He answered, "Yes, it is a very generous offer. The problem is that your job is too small!" Here was a man of God who had his priorities straight.

Every day we face the problem of distractions – anything in the world to keep us from singlemindedly following our Lord's call. At home, or on some foreign fields, it is the same: Bills to pay, documents to process, school car pools to drive, and a thousand other interruptions, some justifiable and some not. Missionary and missions professor Wendell Broom calls this "maintenance time" and warns all of us to zealously guard against permitting our priority hours to be eaten away by the "little foxes" of self-maintenance.[79]

3. *The Procrastination Dragon.* According to James 4:17, procrastination is the dragon of "Soul, take your ease", a great fat lizard that finds it easier to put off until tomorrow the things that are difficult and distasteful. So many indicate an interest in serving Christ in a dynamic way on the front lines, but the time never seems convenient to complete the necessary preparation and move out into the battle. As a rule of thumb, we have found that about one out of every ten seemingly honest aspirants to missionary service ever sees the preparation stage through and actually arrives on the field. Because of this, we in Brazil are reluctant to count recruits as firmly committed until they actually step off the plane onto Brazilian soil. Yes, individuals delay making a firm decision about their personal commitment to Christ. Congregations also procrastinate, putting off until "next year" that more demanding dimension of missions.

4. *The Dragon of Division.* This is a two-bodied dragon that specializes in devouring itself, and in the process, the mission of the church. Paul's scathing denunciation of division and internal strife in the congregation in Corinth (I Cor. 1:10–13 and 3:1–

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79 As outlined in a workshop on principles of church growth, which he led in 1975 in Brazil

9) is an indication of its danger to the proper functioning of the Body. This dragon divides and conquers, thus keeping the church off balance, by creating an atmosphere of preoccupation with internal aches and pains and an attendant loss of spiritual vitality. The only conditions that can create an atmosphere of genuine mission interest are those of peace, unity and purpose. When Christ's body is ill, its functions all slow down or cease entirely.

5. *The Dragon of Myopia.* This is the beast that cannot see afar off. (II Pet. 1:9). A dying church is probably incapable of soul-winning, either at home or elsewhere. So she destroys herself in an endless cycle of failing vision and spiritual death, which precipitate still further loss of vision. Jesus tells us to lift up our eyes – a clearcut command to be cured of myopia and to take a careful look at the fields before us. And in Revelation 3 He again speaks of myopia, instructing the church in Laodicea to anoint her collective eyes with eyesalve, that she might see her own spiritual nakedness. Clear vision is one of the prerequisites to mission planning and production; spiritual myopia means sure death for missions. Arthur C. Clarke, a leading researcher-writer on the exploration of space, writes about myopic vision, in another context, but his observation fits very well in our context here:

> "We all know the narrow, limited type of mind which is interested in nothing beyond its town or village, and bases its judgments on these parochial standards. We are slowly – perhaps too slowly – evolving from that mentality towards a world outlook".[80]

6. *The Lukewarm Dragon.* The church in Laodicea was insipid and because of this, nauseating to her Lord. Indifference is a dragon that creeps in and lulls a church to sleep with the tune that "all is well, so don't rock the boat. ... just take it easy, and we'll all stay afloat."

7. *The Reluctant Dragon.* This one preaches a constant ser-

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[80]Arthur C. Clarke, *The Exploration of Space,* p. 177

mon of caution, explaining that "we may be entering a time of financial repression; we're not meeting our budget, and so we shouldn't risk extending ourselves financially." Unfortunately, many church leaders and treasurers are in the clutches of this dragon. How many mission enterprises are killed, before they are born, by timid churches, afraid to launch out into the deep of real faith in our Lord, who provides all resources for His noble task. "Yes" requires courage and sacrifice, "no is much easier ... for the moment. This old dragon has a twin, called the *Love of Cash Dragon.* Individual Christians sometimes love this world and its comforts far more than they love Christ, and so they fall into the ever-present trap of material comfort (I Timothy 6:10). Is it possible that entire churches, too, can become more interested in things than in souls (or even more interested in a "healthy" bank balance than in a soul-stretching mission)?

8. *The Fun and Games Dragon.* This fellow loves the pleasures of sin more than he loves the Lord (II Timothy 3:4). Some Christians have such a big time enjoying this present world that they are disinclined to give much, if any, attention to carrying out the eternal Commission of Christ.

9. *The Ism Dragon.* This one is a chameleon; able to change his color rapidly from liberalism, to anti-ism, to criticism. Liberalism denies the essentiality of the divine Message and its compelling need to be taken to all men. Anti-ism is more concerned with "legal" purity than in seeing to the weightier consideration of mercy for the lost. The spirit of anti-ism is well described in Matthew 23:24, where Jesus exposes the enormous error of all pharisaic approaches to His Word. The dragon of criticism can cut the support out from under any good man or project. And, of course, fear of criticism has halted countless good workers.

10. *The Social Gospel Dragon.* Feeding the hungry and clothing the naked are essential to our Christian living. However, they are no more essential than clothing naked souls and feeding starving spirits. As pointed out earlier, filling the stomach is a good but very temporary service ... a few hours later, the stomach is empty again. A greater service to humanity is to

alleviate the spiritual sickness that has created such widespread hunger, nakedness and ignorance in general. Is it possible that in this generation we have placed too much relative emphasis on getting the people out of the slums, and not enough emphasis on getting the "slums" out of the people?

11. *The Dragon of Vested Interests.* Congregations tend to become involved in their own "thing", perhaps good in itself, but demanding most of their attention and resources.[81] As a result, their mission to the lost, which should occupy first place in their attention and budget, occupies an humble third, or fourth or even lower position.

12. *The "I don't believe in God or Dragons" Dragon.* In Hebrews 3:19, the Bible states that it was because of unbelief that some of God's people could not enter the land of Canaan. Basic unbelief today on the part of churches and Christians can keep many from entering the world to preach the Gospel. Unbelief in God's commands, in His Eternal Purpose, in His Mission or in His provision for us can paralyze our going and sending.

There are undoubtedly other fearsome dragons along the pathway to missions, but these have sufficient fire on us to create a healthy fear of them, as we enter seriously into our task. All of these hindrances work together to produce a limited self-satisfied response to the all-consuming challenge of carrying the message of hope to every creature.

But how do we go about slaying these anti-missions dragons? How do we replace ignorance, materialism, apathy, and all of the rest, with the ardent desire to be consumed with a missionary spirit? How do we develop the Fire-In-Our-Bones motivation of Jeremiah toward lost humanity?[82]

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[81]The wellknown little book, *The Gospel Blimp*, deals with our ever-present tendency toward programs and projects, to the exclusion of the basics of our Christian service.

[82]Jeremiah 20:9

First, *the will must be educated.* Desire alone is not enough. Many times more people have a passing desire to serve the Lord in some missionary task than those who actually will serve, and then get on with the service.

If we are ever to raise the missionary task, in the congregation's thinking, above the level of a children's game or an optional side project, we must retrain and remotivate the will of the entire congregation. Strange as it may sound, Christians must be educated to sacrifice that new car or better home, in order to give that $5,000, or $25,000, to the mission of the church, and to even prepare themselves seriously to go out to wherever the Lord may call them.

In the following section of the book, we will study in more detail how we can go about slaying the dragons that missions and educate the church to her primary task.

CHAPTER 16
SOME GUARDIAN ANGELS ON THE MISSIONARY PATH

For every dragon on the mission trail, ready to slay us, our Lord has provided strong, fully armed angels, or let us say, dragon slayers, who serve as fortifiers and protectors of His Grand World Enterprise. Among many examples in the Bible, the following show clearly that He is ready and able to guide on His pathway to worldwide outreach:

He commended Abram to go to another land, not fearing the unknown, for He would be with His chosen man every step of the journey (Gen. 12:1–3).

Moses was divinely ordained to lead Israel out of bondage and to the Promised Land. Overriding all of Moses' excuses was the guarantee that God would be with him constantly and powerfully (Ex. 3–4).

Israel was then guided and protected on her pilgrimage through the desert (Ex. 13:8, 33:1–2). The pillar of cloud and fire showed her the way (Ex. 13:2, Num. 10:11–13). Manna, quail and miraculous water sustained her, as Moses struck a rock indicated by the Lord (Ex. 16:1–35, 17:1–7). Paul tells us that the rock of nourishment in the wilderness was actually Christ (I Cor. 10:4).

Upon arrival at the Promised Land, Joshua, the new Captain of Israel's hosts, was encouraged to be brave and strong, for God would be with him (Josh. 1:1–9). The same kind of encouragement was given to Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, at the outset of their ministry (Is. 6:5–10, Jer. 1:1–10, Ezek. 2:1–7).

Then in the New Testament, the Lord advised another one

of His missionaries: "Don't be afraid, Paul ... Speak up for Me, because I am with you, and no one will be able to harm you" (Acts 18:9–11). Here we have God's greatest, most powerful protecting angel, Jesus Himself, promising to be forever with Paul. He will walk by our side, if we will but put one foot in front of the other and begin our own journey, by faith. We have absolutely no reason to fear the flame-spouting dragons along the way. We have no reason to fear lack of guidance or protection, for He promised to be with us always (Mat. 28:20).

Have No Fear

Nor have we reason to fear any other danger. President Franklin D. Roosevelt observed in the dark days of the Great Depression: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."[83] We Christians have even less to fear, for no man can harm us eternally, as we read in Matthew 10:28, Luke 12:32, John 16:33 and Hebrews 13:6, and Romans 8:35–39.

We need have no fear of lack of spiritual guidance or strength for the task, because we were promised a second great strengthening angel, in the form of the Holy Spirit, to live in our hearts (Acts 2:38, Rom. 8:11, 26–27, Eph. 3:20).

Lack of Resources a Problem?

Nor need we fear a lack of resources to fulfill our mission. We have a sharp weapon always available, the Word of God (Heb. 4:12). We have access to every resource in the universe. We are rich beyond measure, if we but believe and ask for His resources to use in fulfilling His task (Num. 13:20, 14:8–9, Eph. 3:20). Paul specifically tells us that the same Lord who provides seed for the sower and bread for our nourishment, will also provide us with every spiritual and material resource needed for the task (II Cor. 9:10–11). In spite of such promises, how often we doubt. How often we fear. How often we attempt to walk within the limits of our own vision, as ten of the twelve spies sent out by Moses. They suffered the disease so common among Christians, *Grasshopper Vision*: "Lord, the

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[83] From his *First Inaugural Address*, March 4, 1933

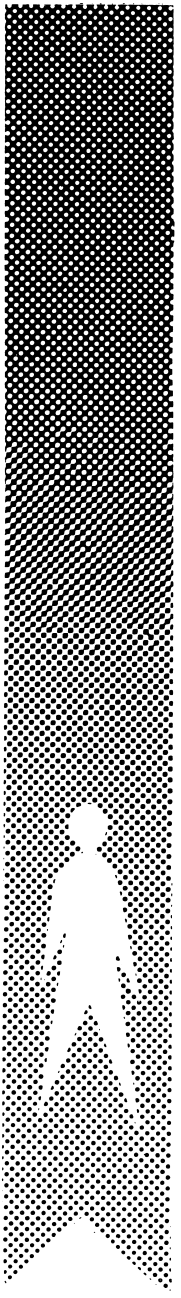
world is so big, and we are so tiny" (Num. 13:33). We have no cause to fear lack of knowledge or wisdom for the task. In James 1:5, we are promised sufficient wisdom for whatever spiritual eventuality we might face. Yes, our God has promised us His angel of wisdom and understanding, so that we might make spiritually correct decisions, as we march for Him. Nor have we need to fear lack of strength, because He has promised this angel, too, as we find in Joshua 1:7–9.

Above all, He has promised us His empowering Spirit, to dwell in our heart (Jn. 14:16–18, Rom. 8:12–17, I Cor. 3:16, 6:19–20). This is real power, power beyond anything we can imagine. This is real guidance, which never fails us. This is God, dwelling with and in His people. It was with good reason that Paul, seeing how well-equipped he was spiritually, could shout: "If God is for us, who can be against us" (Rom. 8:31 NIV).

"I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Phil. 4:13 NIV).

Equipped With Every Weapon

Certainly, our Commander-In-Chief has equipped us with every weapon, offensive and defensive, needed for the task (Eph. 6:10–17). He has promised us every help and all strength, including His very presence, so why should we hold back out of fear? Why should we ever excuse ourselves on grounds of lack of funds, opportunity, or wisdom? Why should we excuse ourselves on the basis that there are dragons out there to confront? It is certain that we will face them, but it is equally certain that we will conquer them, for the Lord will send His angels before us, to clear them out of the trail (Ex. 23:20).



Part V
PREPARING THE CHURCH TO MEET HER TASK

"Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you ..." (Matthew 28:20, Phillips)

"Let Christ's teaching live in your hearts, making you rich in true wisdom. Teach and help one another along the right road ..." (Colossians 3:16, Phillips)

CHAPTER 17
THE GENESIS OF A MISSIONARY SPIRIT IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

In July, 1969 occurred one of the most significant events of all history – Astronaut Neil Armstrong planted the first human footpting on the moon, observing as he did so: "A small step for a man; a giant step for mankind." This was a feat that transcended national boundaries and fired the imagination of all peoples. But his giant step was not possible without the dedicated effort of an army of colleagues. Although he received the attention, the support of thousands was essential to the success of his mission.

Many Holding The Rope

In the same way, all who enter soul-reaching in some other area of the world must go with the knowledge that there are many behind his effort, many who understand and who vow not to fail him.[84] Moreover, if there is to be a next generation of front-line soldiers, far greater in number and better prepared than our present missionary force, there must be serious education and motivation for missions at the local church level. It is at the grass roots where it happens, if indeed it is to happen at all. The local church and her individual members must have strong links to the work in other lands, if for no other reason, to avoid becoming egocentric. Hear this call by Gordon MacDonald for the continuing responsibility of every congregation to become a sender of the message of Christ, and not just a receiver:

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[84]This assurance may be expressed by the image of the frontline man holding one end of an ocean-spanning rope and his supporters at home tightly clutching the other end so as not to let him down.

Every sign in the biblical doctrine and historical practice of the church points to the fact that a contemporary congregation cannot experience the fullness of God's plan for its existence unless it has an intimate involvement in missions as a sending church. The sending church is international in character. Whenever that international dimension has been curtailed or dulled, or whenever that international involvement has become stiffled by ecclesiastical bureaucracy or artificial relationships, the life of the church is retarded.[85]

MacDonald goes on to suggest that missions are essential to the spiritual growth and health of any congregation:

The Great Commission was not a simple command to "go". Within it was the key to the success of the future church. The more expansive the church became in its international evangelistic efforts, the greater would be its inner strength and vitality.[86]

Weakest Link

However, it is precisely at the local church level that we often find the weakest link in the chain of missionary enterprise. Relatively few congregations have a knowledgeable, well-planned program of mission study and preparation, due perhaps to a lack of understanding of how to develop such a program. As a result, they cannot be expected to motivate their own members to become directly involved in missions. In the Harding University survey, already mentioned, active missionaries were asked at one point what or who had motivated them to enter the field. Almost none responded that they had been primarily motivated by the elders of their home congregation, and few, by Bible Class teachers or local ministers. Nor are many prepared and sent out by the congregations in which they were reared.[87]

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[85]Gordon MacDonald, "Closing Gaps Between Missions and Home Churches," in *Church/Mission Tension Today* (C. Peter Wagner, Editor), p. 55

[86]*op.cit.*, p. 56

[87]Harding Missionary Survey. See footnote No. 64

Educate For Missions

One of the principle tasks of a local church is to educate for missions at all levels. Why? Because the basic function of a church is to fulfill her mission. However, to do this, the church must not just know; it must be aware. With apologies to the Apostle Paul, "How shall they call on him (with the Gospel) of whom they have not heard?" Roland Allen puts it even more bluntly:

> "A man cannot possibly desire the salvation of the tribes of Central Africa, if he does not know that they exist."[88]

How, then, shall they of any congregation have a sensitivity to their mission, sacrificing themselves wholly to it, if they are ignorant of the need that exists?

Accepting the principle that missions education should be included in the total educational program of the church, what are some elements in developing this aspect of Christian education? Maxine Fream lists the following essential ingredients for creating a strong missionary education program in the local church:

1. Missions must be considered at the heart of the church's work.
2. Missions must be the major task of the church.
3. We must have the conviction that every congregation, regardless of its size or prior obligations, has a role to play in missions.
4. The leaders must be genuinely interested in missions.
5. The leadership must develop a definite program of planned missions.
6. As an increased mission program takes shape, various means must be employed to further involve the membership.
7. The whole membership must be motivated to engage in some form of mission activity, both in going and in sending others.[89]

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[88]Roland Allen, *Missionary Principles*, p. 45

[89]Maxine Fream, *Go Ye ...*, pp. 95ff

Now let us take a closer look at these points and afterward, add some others.

At The Heart of the Church's Life

First, we have been suggesting at almost every turn of the page that missions must be at the heart of the church's life; her very purpose for being. At no time can missions rightfully be placed at a secondary level, as an appendage to the local work. "Let the Missions Committee take care of it. That's their department" is an indication of the latter, lamentable attitude in many churches.

Major Task of the Church

Second, that missions must be the major task of the church is the logical local response to the mission of Christ Himself. To modify slightly a statement of Jesus, "Where our emphasis is, there will be our heart, also". If missions are emphasized properly throughout the church, she will grow both at home and abroad, because our mission is one, regardless, of locale.

A Role to Play

Third, every single congregation has a role to play in missions. Whether she has two thousand members, or only two, she should be doing all possible to advance the mission of the church, not only in her local community, but also in her world community. Attitides are formed at the very beginning of a congregation's life. If her emphasis is on local housebuilding (and/or keeping), or on satisfying the self-centered desires of the members from the beginning of her history as a congregation, when will she ever learn the true priorities and how to sacrificially accomplish them? When will she begin her collective thinking? It is far better for a new congregation to learn from her first meeting to give liberally for sharing the Word with others than to have to unlearn later the evil practice of "All for self and none for Thee". What would be the results worldwide, if every single congregation of God's people were to give more than half of he total contribution to missions in other areas of the world? Would she suffer any lack whatsoever at home? Would she grow, or would she stagnate?

What Can Be Done With Limited Resources?

But you ask, what can a congregation of two or three members possibly do to participate in missions? Let us imagine that she has a contribution of $60.00 a month, and out of this amount, she places $35.00 a month ($240.00 a year) in some missionary program. Is $35.00 a month of any value to the spreading of the Kingdom? Why, certainly it is! This is more money than some mission points in the world have available *per year* for printing tracts! And incidently, were the two significant mites dropped by the poor widow into the temple treasury (Mark 12:41–44) of any value in the Lord's eyes?

You may ask further, "But how can a beginning congregation afford to spend half of her budget on others, when she has so many pressing needs of her own?" The answer involves our whole concept of spiritual resources. Do we believe that if we give more than we can to the Lord, we will lack anything necessary for His work because of this sacrificial generosity? (Read again Malachi 3:6–12 and II Corinthians 8:1–5, before you answer this question.) How can any congregation afford *not* to think more of others than of self? How can she afford *not* to be missionary in spirit and action?

Leaders Committed To Missions

In the fourth place, the leaders of the church must be committed to missions. How often the leaders – elders, ministers, deacons, teachers – run behind many of the members in commitment to the worldwide mission of the church. It is absolutely essential that the leaders of the church be on a mission for Christ themselves, if they are to convince the congregation of their credibility as men of God.

Program of Planned Missions

Fifth, the leadership must develop a definite program of planned missions. The People's Church of Toronto, Canada gives six times as much to missions as to local activities. How does she manage this? By keeping her priorities straight and by planning a thoroughly challenging mission program. This church calls a yearly meeting of several weeks, just for the congregation. She sets lofty, but reachable missionary goals, understood

by all of the members. Each one then pledges the amount to missionary outreach with which he feels the Lord will bless him during the year, over and above his basic personal needs. The People's Church is not the largest one around, but gives more than $300,000 a year to missions outside of Toronto. The Sunset Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas, has instituted an annual missions emphasis period, for which the families of the church have saved funds the entire year in large juice cans. The 1975 one-time contribution of this church for missions was almost $100,000![90] Since that time this great church has continually increased her contribution to missions, which in 1981 was $ . . . ?

Next, as an increased mission program takes shape, various means must be employed to further involve the membership – inspiring speakers, mission recruits, well-prepared audio-visual presentations, special projects, active enlistment of members to be sent on campaigns and other short-term mission projects, even abroad.

Motivated To Participate

Finally, the whole membership must be motivated to engage in some form of mission activity, both in giving and in sending others. Mellis and Lehnhart suggest that in all of this process, "the goal is understanding and participation, not the extraction of the most money possible.[91] ... They suggest several unique and stimulating means of increasing this understanding and participation, so vital to the success of a church's mission. One is the use of short seminars, at regular intervals in the calendar of the church, to discuss missions. Another is the use of a committee to investigage Our Overseas Mission Work, or Our Missionary in Africa. Yet another is a regular period of interaction, or frank questions and answers about this life-sustaining aspect of the church's work.[92]

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[90]See article, "The Saga of the Hi-C Can", *Firm Foundation*, December 18, 1973, p. 4

[91]Charles Mellis and Robert Lehnhart, "Churches: Your Missions Need You", in *Church/Mission Tension Today*. C. Peter Wagner, Editor, p. 80

[92]*op.cit.*, pp. 78–82

Don Fike suggests two important principles in regard to local motivation for missions: That we should bring in qualified personnel (not necessarily just missionaries directly from the field, but other qualified men as well) to speak, conduct workshops and educate. He says: "Use the Bible School to bring the message to the grass roots and motivate our young people. Add good mission books to the church library and encourage the congregation to read them." He also adds: "No congregation will do more than her elders plan for her to do. A congregation will never rise to meet a challenge unless it is placed before them. Elders, too, then must be informed (and must lead in teaching and motivating for missions)."[93]

Where Our Education for Missions?

These are valid points to consider in developing a much-needed program of mission education and motivation in the local church. A reasonable amount of Bible and moral education has been taught in churches, but not necessarily education for mission, which is a major reason for all Christian teaching. Missionary instruction is defined by Harner and Baker as the sum of all of our efforts to cultivate in children, young people, and adults a Christ-like concern for people of every class, race and nation; an intimate knowledge of how the Christian fellowship is being extended both at home and abroad; and a hearty participation in all endeavors to enlarge this fellowship of Christian faith and brotherhood until it covers the earth.[94] Can it be that our youth are rebelling against the established church because she has built for herself a cross-crowned ivory tower? Because she demonstrates to them only a deadening process of ever learning and never coming to a wholehearted, personally self-sacrificing application of the lessons she has learned?

Where Education Begins

A missionary education program should begin at an infant's introduction to the Christian life – in the home and in the church nursery. I recall vividly the little country church in Ore-

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[93]Don Fike, Unpublished speech given at Twelfth Annual Pan-American Lectures, 1974, Belo Horizonte, Brazil

[94]See Nevin C. Harner and David D. Baker, *Missionary Education in Your Church*

gon where I spent my early years. It wasn't much of a congregation by today's standards, but it taught and supported missions. Such missionary heroes as the George Scotts and Orville Brittells were always invited to visit us while on leave. Finally, half of the church's budget was spent on spreading the Word to other areas.

If missions are to be at the heart of the church's life, they must undergird all Bible teaching. For example, instead of making the facts of Paul's journeys an end in themselves, to be duly memorized, teachers will emphasize the *whys* of Paul's journeys. It is really a matter of shifting the emphaais of our teaching from the peeling to the core.

Seek Opportunities for Motivation

Some church leaders wish to protect their flock from missionary emphasis and appeals. But if missions are at the core of our church life, such appeals will be welcomed, if they come from sincere, legitimate sources. Opportunities for mission information and expression must be provided at all levels. Parents must be motivated to dedicate their children to God's service, as in the case of Hannah and Samuel.[95] Prayers should arise continually for the work worldwide. Elders and others should visit various fields, participate in mission programs overseas and study missions. The preaching staff should be evangelistic in work and emphasis, rather than pastoral, which is the task of elders.

> Whether or not a congregation is mission conscious will depend largely on the local preacher. Whether we like it or not, there is a great deal of truth in the old cliche, "As goes the teacher, so goes the church." It's time we preachers get informed and get involved in world-wide missions.[96]

With this kind of emphasis in the congregation, men and women, boys and girls will arise to express an ardent desire for missions unlimited. How to select and prepare such dedicated hearts for a life of service on the front lines will be the subject of following chapters.

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[95] I Samuel, chapter 1

[96] Don Fike, *op.cit.*,.

CHAPTER 18
WEAVING MISSIONS INTO THE FABRIC OF THE CHURCH'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

At times in the recent history of the church, many local congregations limited their missionary education to an occasional visit by a brother just off the field and to chance exposure to the Book of Acts or to a children's class workbook. "Jesus Loves The Little Children" was a favorite theme in the classroom, but little was said or done to weave His love for the children of all nations into the very fabric of the church's life.

The Tragic Results

We can see all too clearly the results: Generations with only a partially developed sense of missionary motivation. In how very few local churches today do missions play a leading role! In how few lives, even in this newer generation of return to the basics, do we see the white-hot, compelling urge to sacrifice one's life in the very front of the spiritual battle, wherever it may be! In order to give our lives permanently for Christ and His mission, we must show our local churches the very heart of our world-encompassing task. This should be a crimson thread woven into all Bible instruction. And it will be, if we are truly Bible-oriented.[97]

How To Develop Such An Emphasis?

But here is the missions education rub; how do we go about

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[97]See, for example, Acts 8:4, 9'32, 14:27, 16:6–15, 17:17, 18:5, 19:1–10, 20:1–2, 28:30–31, Rom. 10:18 and Col. 1:23

developing such an emphasis in the local church, when at some levels, especially, very little material is available? In answer, let us examine some possible avenues of instruction:

As pointed out in the last chapter, some of this so very essential mission orientation can be accomplished by a shift in emphasis. Instead of teaching only the facts of Paul's life, we need to place more importance on the why's of his Christian life. Ask your classes to research his motivations, purposes, methods, reasoning and teaching in regard to reaching the lost with the life-saving message. Prepare units of study on the Expanding Kingdom, as observed in Acts and the Epistles. Study the lives of the great missionaries of the New Testament, including John the Baptist, Peter, John, Paul, Philip, Stephen, Apollos and others.

Use Mission Themes

Build a series of lessons around great missionary themes of the Old Testament.[98] Our Lord's missions thread may be traced from Genesis through Malachi and makes for inspiring study, especially in the books of prophecy.

Study such themes as God's Attitude Toward Man, Salvation in Christ, the Plan of Redemption Through the Bible, Great Missionaries in the History of Christianity, Missionaries and Missions Today, and other such themes.

Search out workbooks and other source materials that deal with this topic. Review the increasing number of books on the market that have something really vital to say about man, his need for Christ in Today's world, mission methods and challenges.

Keep rotating displays and bulletin boards on mission themes. The old adage, "The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear," is true also in respect to missions. I can still recall, more than forty years later, the poster prominently displayed

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[98]See my book, *Fire In My Bones*, a series of 52 great mission messages from the Old Testament

in our little country congregation in Oregon. On it were pictured missionaries of churches of Christ and their area of work. That visual impression was engraved in my heart for all time.

Involve The Children

Enroll even children of the congregation in mission workshops and seminars, if at all possible. Bring specialists in missions into your classrooms, where they probably will have for more impact and do far more teaching about missions than they are able to do from the pulpit. Allow ample opportunity for fact-to-face encounters with missions. This may well include participation in on-the-field campaigns and lecture programs. The annual Pan-American Lectures, held from city to city in Latin America, is an excellent example of the latter, and has motivated hundreds of people to devote more of their lives and resources to going and sending, especially to Central and South America.

Missionary motivation and zeal depend to a great extent on knowledge of need and opportunity. Roland Allen asserts:

> There must be not only the presence of the Spirit in the Soul, there must be also a recognition of the heathen world, a realization of the existence and the need of souls astray from God to call that Spirit into action.[99]

If lack of a wholehearted mission thrust in our lives, and in the lives of churches, is attributable to ignorance of need and opportunity, it can be corrected by information. If we are filled with the Spirit of Christ, the moment we learn of the existence of those who have not Christ, we will be filled with compassion for their souls and desire to reach them with His message.

Resurrection Needed

If the absence of missionary zeal is due, on the other hand, to arrested spiritual development or restraint of the Spirit, more is needed than information. Such a condition calls for spiritual resurrection. How much can one in a state or arrested develop-

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[99]Roland Allen, *op.cit.*, pp. 44–45

ment know of the extent of the love of Jesus, when his own love cannot reach to other men, whether they live ten miles or thousands of miles away? Such a person is dead to the Gospel, because missions are a real part of its life-giving bloodstream.[100]

Nurture a Consuming Zeal For Missions

But assuming that we are alive spiritually, and that we understand missions to be an integral part of the Gospel, how can we nurture in our lives, and those of every person participating in the congregation, a consuming zeal for souls around the world? By learning all we can about people and places, by visiting in foreign lands and in the "inner city" at home, by short-term service in fields everywhere, by attending missions sessions, by hosting visitors in our homes from other nations, by developing a personal prayer list of souls to gain, by praying for a greater world vision, and by whatever other means may be at our disposal.

Learn Customs and Culture

May we even suggest that classes in geography, customs and cultures, and worldwide spiritual needs be organized among local congregations and youth groups as a supplement to their Bible studies? I proposed such a course to a mission study class in one large church, only to be met with a rather frigid response from some, who felt that studies of this nature had no place in the curriculum of the church.

The Dawning of A New Age

The day when Spirit-filled sons of God are also filled with a knowledge of peoples and thier soul-hunger, and also with a compelling motivation to share the living Christ with them – this will be the dawn of a new age of turning the world upside-down for Him, an era akin to that of the First Century. On that day we will see men and nations changing, and our confused world beginning to move in a positive direction. The course of our lives and of nations can be redirected by the influence of even a few Spirit-consumed men. Witness the impact of Joseph,

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100*ibid.*, p. 48

Daniel and Paul on the nations of their day. Joseph greatly influenced the history of both Egypt and Israel. Daniel is the only man in recorded history who served as Prime Minister for four or five kings, in two separate world kingdoms. Paul brought Christianity to Europe and we are still in his debt for this. May we be among the number of such informed, motivated world-changers!

CHAPTER 19
JOHN DAWKINS NEEDS TO KNOW

John Dawkins is a deacon. He is active in congregation affairs, even to the point of teaching a class for boys and serving in the personal evangelism program outlined by the elders. But John Dawkins, like so many other church members, knows little about the missionary outreach of the church beyond his local community. His image of missionaries is stereotyped – the usual short-trousered, tropical-hat-covered little man in the heart of the jungle, equipped with a Bible, rather than a big-game rifle. John imagines that the missionary receiving a modest amount each month from the church treasury is being well cared for, since surely his living standards and expenses are modest. (In other words, the average church member neither knows for certain why missions exist nor what mission workers are supposed to do.)

Direct Knowledge and Exposure

If the church is to meet her mission in our explosive age, John Dawkins needs to know. He needs to know something of mission methods, difficulties, pitfalls, frustrations, expenses and other factors involved in the tasks, in order to participate intelligently in and pray diligently for the worldwide thrust of the church. John, too, must experience more than an indirect, financial part in some remote mission enterprise. He must be directly involved in decision-making and development of missionary outreach, if he, too, is to be a partner in the major task of the church – involvement with the souls of men, worldwide. He must be prepared to understand the fact there may be times of depression and defeat on the field, as well as times of success. He must be ready to accept the possible physical or emotional collapse of that worker who had such noble dreams and made such glowing promises. He must understand the role of the sending church, along with the role of the person sent and of those receiving his message.

Aware of the World

Due to vastly increased interntaional travel on the part of "average" church members, greater awareness of the world and its complexities, along with increasingly complicated business and financial responsibilities which they face daily, many church members are not satisfied with cliches and other pat answers to their questions about the mission and missionaries of the church. Missionary writer Gordon MacDonald observes in this context:

> Returning missionaries are often shocked at the questions which they are being asked by churchmen, especially by the younger generation. Having the title *missionary* no longer entitles one to immunity from frank questioning.[101]

He goes on to suggest that we may want to begin closing the credibility gap between missions and sending churches by "pointing up the inadequacies of missions today to provide the sending church with a uniform understanding of biblical foundations for mission practices."[102] What motivated men in Bible times to take the Commission of Christ seriously? They were Biblically oriented, alert to their primary task, and sensitive to the call of God's Spirit. The same motivations must exist today, both for those going and those sending.

The Reason For and Scope of Missions

To be informed and alert requires knowledge of the reason for missions and also of their scope. MacDonald says:

> How many (average members), for example, know the difference between service missions and church-planting missions? What does the average church know about the problems of mission administration? How can (members) make an intelligent decision about the proper place in which to invest the Lord's money?[103]

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[101]Gordon MacDonald, *Closing Gaps Between Missions and Home Churches,* in *op.cit.*, p. 59

[102]*op.cit.*, p. 63

[103]*op.cit.*, p. 61

And to his questions we should add, How many John Dawkins's (good, dedicated Christians at home) know anything about mission methods, qualifications for missionary personnel and other key aspects of the increasingly complex matter of missions, especially in an international setting? How aware are they of the demands made on their workers' emotions and time, as well as on his financial support? How aware are they of inflation, legal technicalities, and the mountain of documentation required of their man in another country? (For example, in the past twelve months, Brazil's inflation rate has risen 121 percent. Do the members of supporting churches understand the implications of this for their families on the field?) How aware are they of health hazards there? Of the growth pains of the church on the field? Of the tensions that may be arising between the national churches and the foreign missionary, between their country and his, between them and the sending churches?

Questions That Should Be Asked

These are all questions that John Dawkins should be asking, and for which he should be receiving straightforward answers. He should know the nature of the work to be done and the use of funds sent. He should recognize the difference between missionaries at work planning churches (and their unique difficulties) and those in service roles, such as publications (and the difficulties they face). He should also be made aware of the true role of the sending church, the role of those being sent, and the role of indigenous churches, that in turn must eventually become sending churches.

How To Become An Authority

How can John become at least an armchair authority on missions? Part of the responsibility rests with him, to attend mission workshops and seminars, to listen to the quiz visiting missionaries, to read key books on mission methods and tensions today and to visit foreign fields, if at all possible. Of course, part of the responsibility rests with those leading the congregation, to provide exposure, instruction and information on missions to the membership. During these periods, mission books can be reviewed, reports from the field analyzed, nations and tribes studied. Or, an annual meeting may be held for the

purpose of examining open fields.[104] Or, as suggested in *Church/ Mission Tensions Today,*[105] why not name a Committee *To Investigate Our Mission Work Abroad,* or *To Research Our Missionary in Ethiopia?* Some churches expose their members to foreign mission settings by sending them along with a summertime campaign group, or to participate in a missionary lecture or conference in another country. Money well spent, indeed! Those going on such journeys will generally return as loyal backers of missions.

John Dawkins Needs To Know

John Dawkins needs to know missions. He has a right to know missions. Informing him is a basic part of the educational program of the church, an aspect just as vital as teaching the children about missions, or communicating regularly with the field.

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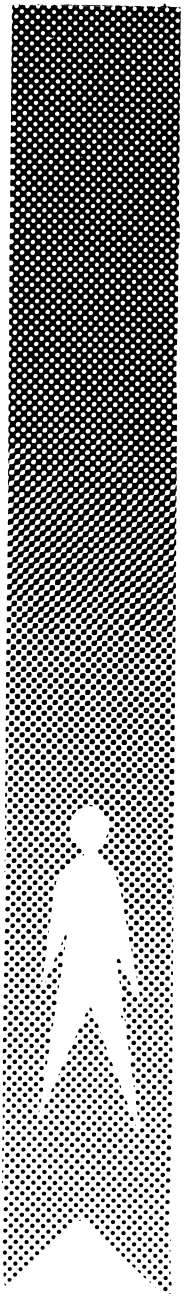
[104]Such an annual event is being conducted by various congregations, especially the Sunset Church of Christ, in Lubbock, Texas

[105]Gordon MacDonald, *op.cit.*, p. 82



Part VI
RECRUITMENT AND PREPARATION OF WORKERS

"Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to find Saul. When he found him he brought him up to Antioch. Then for a whole year they met together with the church and taught a large crowd" (Acts 11:25–26, Phillips).

"While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them' " (Acts 13:2, RSV).

CHAPTER 20
"SEARCH AND SELECT" MISSIONARY RECRUITMENT

What we are advocating at this point is revolution – revolution in our method of missionary motivation, education and preparation! What we are suggesting is that elders tap on the shoulder families and individuals in the congregation, preparing these persons to go out to a definite field, with the blessings and full support of their home congregation! Such a radical step might do more good for missions than anything else we might attempt.

Workers With A Missionary Attitude

Breeding of workers with a missionary attitude is a principle task of the local church. "Out of your own number shall men arise for missions" should be a characteristic of a real New Testament congregation. "Separate unto me Jim and Sally for the work" should be happening continually. However, one of the few places where it does happen is in congregations adjacent to Christian college campuses, where students are selected and sent out on one-year or two-year missionary helper programs,[106] or at least on international campaigns.[107] Sadly, in most cases, the last place in which a prospective missionary seeks backing for his intentions is in his home church, where he is considered only "that carpenter's son". Such an attitude is lamentable, robbing the local church of the opportunity to send out one of her very own products to the field.

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[106]The Mormon Church is the crowning example of such recruitment. Some Christian colleges and local churches in other groups also follow this practice

[107]Currently, our principle source for recruits to come in future years to Belo Horizonte is among former Brazil campaigners

Herein Lies A Problem

However, the practice of tapping local members for missionary service poses a problem. If a person or family is selected for service, should they be willing to go? You, for example, reader. Would you accept the authority of the elders in their decision to send you, say, to Afghanistan? Now do you see the point more clearly?

A Hotbed of Recruitment and Preparation

Back to worker selection, the congregation herself should be a hotbed of missionary motivation and preparation – the foremost source, even ahead of colleges, seminaries and other institutions. And she will be, if missions are given their proper emphasis among her leaders and members.

In addition to recruitment among the stalwart brothers in one's own local church body, the elders should be searching also for others who are prepared and preparing. My own sponsoring church, Richland Hills Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas, heard of our interest in Brazil and sought us out, when we had not yet even met the congregation. If such a "search and select" procedure were general in the church and were coupled with adequate worker preparation within the local congregation, there would be far less need for tiring and costly scouring of the country-side for missionary support. Our whole system of autonomous churches, though based on a biblical principle, seems to have produced hat-in-hand missionary begging, which can hardly be considered in the spirit of New Testament missions. Perhaps this has come about because congregations are jealous of their autonomy, reluctant to assume much missionary outreach and hesitant to respond to overseas opportunities. Some even act as if they were granting a special favor by accepting a program of soul-saving in some other area of the world! Oh, for more churches that consider it an honor to be an integral part of some missionary outreach!

Receptive to Opening Doors

We must always be sensitive and receptive to new opportunities as they come to us. Doors of opportunity don't always open with a bang — they usually swing ajar with hardly a squeak.

We must always be alert, if we are to see them opening. Paul couldn't see Macedonia, the gateway to all of Europe and the Greco-Roman Culture, until he was forced through this gate by the Lord (Acts 16:6–10). Can you picture his commenting the next morning on his vision, "Timothy, I had the worst nightmare last night. This strange fellow from Macedonia kept calling me."?

Cutting off an opportunity without prayerful attention to it first can be disastrous for all concerned, including the congregation herself. Mordecai spoke to this point when he reminded Esther:

> If you fail this role for which you came to the Kingdom, the Lord will provide deliverance from some other quarter, but you will have gone down to defeat. Remember, however, that you may have been placed in the Kingdom for such a time as this.[108]

Of course, workers and works should be selected with great care. Consideration should be given to a person's motivation for missions, personal and spiritual growth, fitness to the task, adaptability, health and special skills.

Prerequisites To Success

Prerequisites to successful service on the front lines, according to author Harold C. Cook, are: *Devotion to God, spirituality, moral courage, purpose in life, discernment, zeal, constancy and leadership.* These, says Cook, are essential qualifications that have marked the ministry of all of the really great missionaries down through the ages.[109]

To his list we add: *experience, proven ability and general adaptability,* as indicated in Galatians 6:4 and I Timothy 3:6–10. Beyond these prerequisites, we must consider specialized qualifications, which include:

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[108]See Esther 4:14

[109]Harold R. Cook, *An Introduction to Christian Missions,* pp. 103–108

1. *Ability to learn foreign languages,* if they are involved in his proposed mission thrust. He should demonstrate before the fact that he has the necessary capacity for languages and sufficient desire to devote himself to years of tedious study. Surprisingly, perhaps, some arrive on the field and learn later, to the dismay of all, that a foreign language is just not their "thing". Language skill tests are available and should be taken seriously, before departing for a field where another language (or languages) is required.

2. *Ability to adapt himself physically and mentally to a new culture and different living conditions.* It is no easy task to survive culture shock and to adjust to an entirely different "world". Culture shock will come, at various levels of intensity, and it isn't limited to the first few months on the field. One's diet, schedule, health habits, and many other personal aspects of life must undergo disquieting changes. The foreign worker must learn to live with the fact that he is a foreigner and, in a great sense, a man without an earthly country. He must be willing to live a goldfish-bowl existence, perhaps with little privacy and countless demands on his time, his emotions and his money.

3. *Potential for enough years of service on the field to warrant the necessary training and expense for equipment, passage, and perhaps two years of apprentice-type learning on the field.* Churches invest considerable sums of time and money in worker, time and money which may not begin to show much return for perhaps years. He becomes really valuable to the cause only after he is well settled into the culture, language and work. This may require five years or more, depending on the field.

4. *Solid general and specific educational background.* This should include a good sampling of the Liberal Arts, intensive preparation in Bible and Christian service and specialized background in cultural anthropology and mission methods. As an American abroad, the missionary is expected to be conversant in many fields – literature, the arts, the sciences, politics, religion, modern day philosophies ... It comes as a rude shock to him to find that many of those with whom he is working have vastly more knowledge of music, art, languages, and even

American literature, than he himself has. As a missionary, he may be called upon by authorities in his host country to translate some legal or technical document for them. He may be forced to become a song writer or teacher, carpenter, or first aid nurse, due to the very needs that exist on the field. For example, I write and translate hymns, letter signs, lay brick and participate in many other activities which were not necessarily a part of my formal education, because these and many other skills are required of me.

5. *A personality that is aggressive, yet not abrasive, gentle and gentlemanly, graceful with people, loving, and yet strong for truth and justice, when strength is called for.* In short, he needs to live in a manner that is consistent with the principles which he will be teaching on the field. He must be able to work well with others, both other missionaries and fellow Christians in his host country.

6. *He must have a stable marriage and/or love life.* If married or engaged, his partner or partner-to-be must also be dedicated, prepared, adaptable and otherwise qualified for the task ahead. The field is no place to correct a family problem.

Prayer Absolutely Essential

Because of the urgency and dimension of missions, much prayer should go into the selection of workers. Mistakes are *so* easy to make, and so difficult, expensive and shattering to correct. By all means, "Separate unto the Lord Jim and Sally for the work", but do it wisely and well. All eternity is at stake.

CHAPTER 21
"AS A LAMB TO THE SLAUGHTER ..."

Picture these incredible scenes:

"Jet" Jones is a young man, excited by the idea of space exploration, who volunteers for the next voyage to the moon. To his delight, he is selected for the team. Quickly he packs, travels to Houston, and presents himself for his space suit. Of course, such a naive undertaking can only end in disaster, because he has not undergone the very extensive training necessary for successful functioning in the hostile environment of space.

"Rich" Richardson is the son of a wealthy industrialist, who obtains an illegal license for his son to practice medicine. Rich had failed in his efforts to become a doctor by normal means, but now with license in hand, he opens his own clinic. Soon he decides to get into the really big money, by turning to surgery, again without benefit of preparation. Needless to say, he loses his first patient and is imprisoned for malpractice.

"Flash" Fletcher always wanted to be a track star, so he "arranges" his way into the decathlon in the Olympics. "What, *me* practice?" was his attitude. But his lack of training soon becomes obvious, as he fails to complete the ten gruelling events required of him.

"Chris" Christian is moved at a missionary workshop to dedicate his life to soul-saving in some foreign land – laudable desire. Soon he makes his desire known here and there, and after considerable effort, raises the necessary funds. However, he doesn't spend any time or money on learning in advance the language and culture of his selected area, nor does he study mission methods, past or present. So he arrives on his field ill-equipped to succeed in what is *always* a demanding discipline, in difficult surroundings. In his new task, well-prepared specialization is

called for, along with knowledge of the Word and strong dedication, but he has only the last qualification.

Why Unprepared Frontline Soldiers?

No thinking person would agree to launching an "astronaut" who is unqualified, calling in a "surgeon" who is an amateur, or permitting an untrained "athlete" to participate under his country's colors in the Olympics. Why, then, do we still allow dozens of men and families to enter one of the noblest and most demanding of all tasks – sharing the Good News to other cultures – essentially unprepared for the task? Why do we permit unqualified persons to operate on the eternal souls of other men? When we do so, we are sending these supposed surgeons of the souls as "lambs to the slaughter," with little chance for success and the strong possibility of an early, frustrating return home, not to mention the disasters they may have precipitated on the fields. And we who sent them must answer in part for their failure.

Phil Elkins relates various calamitous cases of workers sent to the field in earlier years, without specific preparation for their task:

> Practically every missionary sent was expected to be engaged in a public preaching ministry. Yet some had little or no experience in preaching prior to being sent overseas. An example of the type of problems this presents is one 30-year-old teacher with a B.A. in physical education. He had no full-time preaching experience, but was sent to take the principalship of a ministerial training school with 60 students ... Another man in his early 20's with an eighth grade education, only 14 months out of his own baptismal water, with no preaching experience, became the missionary minister for a church in Southeast Asia.[110]

Oh yes, some succeed gloriously on the field with little advance preparation. These are the few, by God's grace, who have

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110Phillip Wayne Elkins. *Church-Sponsored Missions,* pp. 48–49

a built-in capacity to observe, relate and adapt. But for every inadequately prepared person who succeeds, many fail.

Such failure is unnecessary. Through years of preparation, only the best become surgeons, astronauts, or Olympic contenders. And these best are solidly prepared. It should be the practice of every local congregation to send to the field only those who are experienced and prepared for the highly complex task of soul-saving and church-planting within the framework of other cultures and religions.

What Is Involved In Preparation?

What should be involved in this preparation? It is understood that the potential overseas or cross-cultural worker for the Lord knows the Word thoroughly and practices it in his life, and that he has in-depth experience in soul-winning and local church work. He should also be prepared health-wise, attitude-wise and in general education.

Language and Culture Preparation

Beyond this, he should be at least partially prepared, before going, in the language and in a basic understanding of the people and culture of his chosen area. He should understand the principles of cultural anthropology and how to communicate the message of Christ, in meaningful terms, to other men, within their own cultural setting. Also, he should have a grasp of the history of missions, of mission methods, of principles of church planting and growth, and of other such facets of his newly chosen life. Otherwise, he is doomed to repeat the mistakes of thousands before him, and perhaps end early his noble venture for Christ, frustrated and disappointed.

Not Difficult To Prepare

Such preparation is not difficult to receive in our day. For example, Abilene Christian University (Abilene, Texas) offers three separate degree programs in mission preparation, as well as an annual summer missions seminar, a "crash couse" for those whose situation doesn't permit an entire degree program. And other colleges and universities, as well as seminaries and preacher-training schools offer various levels of preparation for

missionary service.[111] Opportunities for on-the-field training are offered on a one to two year basis by a number of colleges. Pepperdine University (Malibu, California), Oklahoma Christian College (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), Abilene Christian University (Abilene, Texas), York College (York, Nebraska) and Sunset Church of Christ's School of Missions are examples of institutions providing apprenticeships in missions.

Perhaps only in the area of religion, life's most crucial aspect, do we allow inadequate preparation for service. *This must not continue!* There is far too much at stake in our lost and confused world to send even one "lamb to the slaughter", unprepared for the greatest profession of all, that of turning other peoples to Christ.

[111] Fuller Theological Seminary's School of World Mission now offers various practical extension courses for on-the-field personnel, along with summer seminars and a regular undergraduate and graduate degree program on campus. Abilene Christian University has extension courses, with line teachers, in other countries. These are but two of various options for in-service study in missions

CHAPTER 22
THE BIBLE IS NOT ENOUGH!

"Well, I knew that sooner or later he would turn liberal, and now he's gone and done it, saying that the Bible is insufficient!"

Wait a moment, brother, before you break my writing arm. What I'm saying is that, for the missionary in training, Bible study *alone* is not enough.

Why not the Bible alone, when the Law of the Lord is perfect? Why not, when we are told that the Word furnishes us "unto every good work"? Why not, when the Golden Rule gives us a guide for any situation in life?

Why The Bible Is Not Enough

Why not, indeed? As long as a person functions within the framework of his own culture, he is able to know reasonably well how to go about good works, how to apply the Golden Rule (even though he may not always follow through on its implications), and how to follow the Eternal Guide for every situation. But let this person step into a radically opposite culture from his own, and life becomes a different ball game. He may still be trying to play American football, spiritually speaking, when everyone in his new cultural setting is playing their own brand of football (soccer). He no longer knows how to interpret or understand what goes on about him. He attempts to do good, but often finds it backfiring. He tries to follow the Golden Rule, but what he would have others do to him, and what he therefore does to others, may be contrary to their customs, and because of this, misinterpreted by them.

All Things To All Men

Did not the Apostle Paul become "all things to all men" (I Cor. 9:22)? However, he accomplished this difficult feat by years of unconscious preparation within the various cultures of his day – born and reared in Tarsus, a free Roman city; learning the literature, morals, and manners of Greeks, Romans and other Gentile peoples in that great world center: and then schooled at the feet of the leading Jewish teacher, Gamaliel, in Jerusalem, the seat of Jewish culture. Paul was thus a man for all cultures, a man with an understanding of various societies, a man with a greatly expanded world view as contrasted with the narrow provincial outlook on life and society of many of his fellow Jews. Paul's adaptability in various situations and cultural settings was no accident. He was thoroughly prepared to become all things to all men.

On The Same Wavelength

This can hardly be over-emphasized. To engage in communicating the message of Christ to other cultures, the Bible is not enough by itself. The worker must have a sound knowledge of the Word and experience in its use, certainly. But he must also become all things to his host Japanese, or Ibo, or Brazilian, if he is to win this man to Christ. He must communicate on the same wavelength as his host, and he must then be able to absorb and analyze feedback from his national contact, if he is to expect anything like reasonable mutual understanding to take place.

How does he learn to become all things to those of another language and heritage? By intensive study of that language and of its twin, the culture that both shaped it and was shaped by it. By learning the principles of cultural anthropology and cross-cultural communication.

Technical Tools Needed

The Bible can equip him to be motivated to serve. It can give him a great message to share. It can teach him patience and sen-

sitivity to, and love for, others. It can cause him to desire to heal, not hurt. But he will still not be able to apply these Biblical principles well without the technical tools that the above-mentioned courses can provide. Nor will he be able to avoid the errors of method already tried and discarded by his predecessors on the field, without a basic knowledge of mission history and methods. To paraphrase a famous quote, "He who does not learn from the mistakes of missions history is doomed to repeat them." We can learn from the Scriptures about missions in the first century of the church's history, but after that, we must turn to other sources. Again, the Bible is not enough for the person who wishes to enter the field knowledgeable in missions history. He must not only know Biblical principles involved in missions, but also historical and contemporary methods, principles and areas of receptivity and other related topics.

Communicating Christ to another culture, then, is a complex task. Some, by the grace of God and their own ability to observe and adapt, have succeeded with little formal preparation. Most, however, are likely to fail, if they enter the field on a wing and a prayer alone.

Be Thoroughly Prepared

Do you contemplate being a missionary to those of another heritage, locally or worldwide? Then prepare as thoroughly as possible for this greatest of all causes. General knowledge and desire are necessary, but are not sufficient in themselves. Add the studies that will equip you specifically for your task ahead. Attend mission workshops. Enroll in mission seminars, such as the annual seminar at Abilene Christian University. Study the language and learn all you can of your target area and its culture. Obtain, if possible, a degree in missions or related studies. Continue to research the Scriptures, even more carefully, and use every opportunity for application of them daily. Pray diligently for patience and guidance. And along with all of this, place your life in the Lord's hands. What you still may lack in preparation, after all of this effort, the Lord will abundantly supply. He will use you on His schedule and in His way, when you are truly prepared. Remember, in your hurry to get with

the task, that the Lord took eighty years to prepare Moses for forty years leadership. In your case, another two or three years of specialized preparation may well mean the difference between success and failure in the culture to which you have been drawn.

CHAPTER 23
HOW TO PREPARE A MAN FOR HIS MISSION

Mission work, then, especially in a foreign setting, is a task for carefully prepared Christians, and definitely not for misfits, or starry-eyed romantics, who launch out on an emotional whim. Human souls and their eternal destinies are at stake. Those attempting to cure their spiritual illnesses should be at least as well prepared as those who diagnose and treat physical illness. How long is a surgeon in formal preparation and internship, before being trusted with critically ill patients?

Mission work requires specialized skills on the part of the person entering such service. Remember that, contrary to the idea of some, *the Bible alone is not enough!* Nor are desire or dedication alone. All of these are essential, but more is needed. Without specialized preparation, God's servant cannot even reach successfully other ethnic groups in Miami or Minnesota, let alone those of more different and distant cultures. In communicating the Gospel in one's own culture, a person sees, hears and understands with a moderate degree of accuracy. But without special preparation for cross-cultural communication, he cannot interpret what he sees and hears, nor can he speak adequately to his new situation.

Despite this, however, it has been asserted by mission researchers that 73% of men now on the field entered with no specialized training whatsoever! Imagine what tremendous problems this can create in their lives and work.

For those who want to enter a field with a reasonably good chance of survival and success, here are some of the indispensables of mission preparation:

1. *Spiritual preparedness.* The heart must be ready, along with the mind and body, for this more demanding of all spiritual tasks.

2. *Training in the Message.* He must know how to study and research the Word, understand and explain it clearly, first in his own tongue.

3. *Experience in preaching the Message.* This includes teaching, soul-winning, church organization and development.

4. *Maturity and seasoning.* A person cannot expect to be granted a medical doctor's license without seasoning as an intern and resident physician. Nor should a would-be missionary expect to be sent out on his own without reasonable experience.

5. In addition to these basics, the candidate must have specialized preparation. Every person going out into the world will face different needs, as well as taking with him his own unique experience and abilities. No two situations on the field are alike, yet there are some generally recommended steps or preparation for all missionaries-in-training. These include:

a. *Language study.* In his book, *An Introduction to Christian Missions,* Harold R. Cook quotes a national as saying: "English speaks to our heads, but our own language speaks to our hearts."[112] Knowing the language or languages of the people with whom we are working is indispensable, even in the case of a bilingual community in the U.S. The person going should prove his ability to learn another language before the fact, because some otherwise qualified people seem incapable in this respect. And then on the field, more is needed than grammar books. He must learn the language of the market place, business and newspapers and of cartoons and jokes. How long should he study the language? It requires years to even come close to mas-

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[112]Harold R. Cook, *op.cit.*, p. 139. See also David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*, chapters 26–27, for a good study on the need for language mastery on the field

tering another idiom, even for a person with unusual ability. We should accept this fact of missionary life and plan for it.

b. *Linguistics and phonetics.* Such study is an excellent foundation for all language learning. Also, for many tongues, a prior knowledge of Greek, Latin or other source languages is helpful.

c. *Cultural anthropology.* This is the study of man and his relationship to culture. This area is as essential as language study, and is totally linked to it. Culture is a shaper of language, and in turn, is shaped by language.

6. *Cross-cultural communication.* This is the science of communicating from one cultural and language background to another, a difficult art and one generally learned only after careful study and much experience.

7. *Mission history and methods.* This study can help the worker learn from past mistakes, so that he is not doomed to repeat them, and from successful methods being employed today.

8. *Principles of church growth.* This study covers how to plant churches, build them up in faith and numbers and teach them to be self-perpetuating, church planting bodies, whether in tribal areas, villages or major cities.

9. *Intensive study of the land to which he is going, its history, geography, politics, culture, religions, etc.*

10. *Specialized areas.* Some knowledge of first aid, business methods and record-keeping, leadership training, Bible camp and youth work, counselling and case work is helpful. Other areas include printing, art, journalism, piloting, ham radio and medicine. These require experience both beforehand and on the field, in order to adapt to the situation faced there. Specialists are needed on the mission field, but they should be well-prepared and should be *missionary* specialists and not just professional technicians.

Considering this kind of advanced training, how can we prepare a man for his mission? How much time should be devoted to this preparation? There is no precise answer, for preparation is inclusive and cumulative. Someone once asked a preacher, "How long did you spend preparing that sermon?" The answer: "Oh, about twenty years!"

Unable to Plug In

Dr. Allen Redpath, a missionary lecturer, warns us: "It is distressing to see how many families are sent at great expense and effort to the field, only to arrive there and find that they are unable to plug themselves in at the other end."[113] Yes, send your people all over the world; but send them with the preparation necessary to plug themselves in successfully when they arrive.

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[113] From a lecture given in Brazil

CHAPTER 24
WORLD, HERE I COME, READY OR NOT!

It happened at the mission workshop. As heroes from God's front lines of spiritual combat told their stories, I was moved to take the plunge and give myself wholly to the Lord – to go where He wants me to go, and to do what He wants me to do.

Oh, the incomparable joy that has flooded my soul since that great day. I have finally quit fighting my Master and am now preparing to sacrifice my very blood, if necessary, for His cause.

I know there will be hardships, dangers, and trials awaiting me. So much the better. Someday, I can perhaps say with Paul, "I have fought a good fight", Since my decision has been reached, I, too, am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.[114]

My dedicated friend, you are to be honored for the decision you made. But there are some down-to-earth matters we should discuss before you pack your suitcase. Frontline service is no vacation. Nor is it normally a martyr's suffering. It is, rather, a daily grind of facing abysmal ignorance of the Word, teaching in another language, irritations, encounters with a different culture, tedious language study, clashes with co-workers and other difficulties, intermingled with time of great joy.

"But," you object, "I thought that missionaries and mission work were above such trivialities." Let me assure you that a trans-ocean move does not mean you have left conflicts and problems behind.

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[114]By the author

The Great Clothespin Controversy

I illustrate this by repeating a story told by Cline and Harold Paden and Carl Mitchell, veteran missionaries to Italy. When their mission team arrived there shortly after World War II, housing was extremely scarce, so several families were forced to share one rambling home. And they were almost destroyed over clothes-pins! Space and time for hanging the wash were limited, because all had to share both a single line and a very few pins. Tensions became so great over whose turn it was to use the line and who was using how many pins, that an emergency meeting was called to avert disaster.

In other fields workers have even parted company over personalities, mission methods, pet traditions and such like! Yes, missionaries are human and they are determined, or they wouldn't have made it this far. Under the strains they face in a foreign culture, then, they are apt to be intense in their feelings.

Furthermore, they are an independent lot. By their very being on the field in the first place, they have demonstrated a full measure of determination. They have strong convictions and are not going to give in easily on them, even in areas of human judgment.

Some Serious Questions

So, dedicated brother, it would be good for you to ask yourself some serious questions about your attitude and preparation for this step.

For example, you will have to present the Gospel message in the most clear-cut manner possible, whether you are a "vocational" or a "fulltime" missionary. You will be confronted with a host of religious ideas completely strange to you. You will find yourself re-evaluating your own stand, to sort out the truths of the Bible from your personal set of traditions and notions. Therefore, are you thoroughly grounded in the Bible? If you are not familiar with the weapon of your warfare, you will be better off back in training.

Mission work is largely teaching and personal evangelism.

Have you been successful in these tasks at home? If not, teach the lost and win souls to Christ in your own culture. Then you will be more ready to serve in the more difficult environment of a foreign language and culture.

Different In Technique

Mission work is often different in technique from much of our church work at home. Have you studied the wealth of available information on mission methods? If not, you could do more harm than good on the field while learning your methods by trial and error.

Regarding methods, if you plan to join a team going to the field, or already on the field, you should be aware of certain built-in difficulties.[115] One of the greatest difficulties faced by many mssion groups is disagreement over which approach to use. Do you know the methods being employed by your prospective team? Do you agree in principle with these methods? If so, you will probably adapt to the program developed over the years by that team. If not, we firmly suggest that you re-examine your own philosophy of missions, or seek a field where you can be in agreement with your colleagues.

In fact, do you really know these very human beings with whom you are casting your lot? Do you have anything in common with them, apart from a goal of serving the Lord in the same geographical area? Remember, you will see a lot of them in the years to come, at times in the most trying of circumstances.

What about your personal problems? Remember, they will show in sharper focus on the field than they did at home. If you, or members of your family, have serious emotional or physical difficulties, those factors need to be given careful consideration before leaving for the field, for they will probably be aggravated there, rather than resolved.

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[115] See Roger E. Dickson's book, *Grouped In Groups*, and my chapter on "Group Evangelism in Missions", in *Guidelines For World Evangelism*, for more in-depth consideration of the blessings and/or curses of group evangelism overseas

Not everyone can master a foreign language. Nor can everyone adapt to another culture. Have you studied the language in questions? Is it reasonable to assume that you will develop a working proficiency in it? Have you traveled enough to understand cultural differences between people? Can you adapt to new situations? If so, you may be able to adjust to conditions in another country.

In Your Hands

So the matter is in your hands. Are you willing to face the facts and the field? Are you willing to prepare yourself adequately for such a move? Are you willing to adapt to an entirely different life situation?

If your answers are "yes", you will be welcomed and useful on the field, regardless of your position there, and you will probably remain long enough to warrant your going.

If your answers are "no" to any of these questions, you owe it to yourself, to the brethren, to the field and to the Lord, to either prepare better for this most demanding challenge of saving souls abroad, or to reconsider your decision about going.

Some missionary candidates prefer fulltime service on the field, under the guidance of elders back home. This is a noble decision and one which carries with it great responsibility toward supporting churches, the field, yourself and your Lord. I, for one, would not have it any different. My fourteen years in Brazil have been fruitful and on the whole, satisfying, as I have served fulltime, preparing Christian publications, preaching and teaching. My sponsoring congregation all of these years has been the Richland Hills Church of Christ, in Fort Worth, Texas. Our relationship has been positive and mutually trusting. This has enabled me to creatively and energetically give my full attention to the task.

However, fulltime service is not everyone's inclination. Some prefer to work at some other profession, giving their free time and influence to the Kingdom. This, too, is a noble decision.

You Can Get There ... You and God Willing

If, after wading through this information on mission preparation, you remain convinced that foreign missionary service, on a vocational, self-supporting basis, is your niche, here are some practical suggestions for you. First, ask yourself these "Five W's":[116]

1. WHOM to contact: with WHOM to work?
2. WHAT kind of opportunity fits my personal background?
3. WHERE can I expect to fit in best?
4. WHY a certain vocation and not some other?
5. WHEN should I take the steps of preparation and entry into another country?

Now that you are confused with the questions, let us attempt to set you in the direction of some possible answers.

Whom to Contact

There are numerous publications listing overseas vocational opportunities. These include:

Looking for Employment Overseas, World Trade Academy Press, N.Y.

Guide to Employment Abroad, Hill International Pub., N. Islip, N.Y.

How to Travel and Get Paid For It, Harrison Pub., Greenlawn, Long Island, N.Y.

Careers of Service in the Church, Lippincott, Philadelphia and N.Y.

Jobs That Take You Places, McKay Co. N Y

Next Steps for the Missionary Volunteer, Moody Press Chicago.

Service and Employment Opportunities, Council on Student Travel, 777 U.N. Plaza, N.Y.

Volunteers and Non-Profit Agencies Interested in Technical Assistance, American Council of Voluntary Agencies.

How to Get a Job With an American Firm Overseas, International Publications, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46229.

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[116]From Overseas Opportunities, *World Vision Magazine,* Reader's Service, Monrovia, California

In addition, the federal government issues inexpensive bulletins on foreign government and business openings. For information of these publications, contact the following agencies:

U.S. International Communication Agency, 1776 Pensylvania Ave., N.W. Wash.
D.C. (Service in the USICA and Bi-National Centers Programs)
U.S. Department of State, Personnel Div., U.S. Dept. Agriculture, Wash D.C.
Agency for International Development, Office of Personnel, Wash. D.C. 20390.
U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C. (A number of publications are printed on U.S. business activity overseas, including listings of companies and their addresses.)
U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. (Thousands of titles are available on foreign countries, federal jobs overseas, overseas economics and business opportunities, and such like.)

A Word of Caution

I need to add here a word of caution about vocational missions. Some professional people, who are also exceptionally dedicated Christians, have served in both realms, with notable success, on the field. They have given much-needed financial and moral support to the work. They have brought the church a level of prestige, with government and business people, that she might not otherwise have enjoyed. They have placed their specialized skills at the disposal of the brethren on the field. They have brought sound administrative ability to the work of the church. They have shown a practical example to nationals of how to be successful business men and successful missionaries at the same time, without having to rely on church support.

However, many others, and perhaps the majority, have not contributed much, in the way of practical service, to the mission. They have gone ill-prepared in language, culture and missions. Their profession turns out to require more time and effort than it did in the less complex and better understood situation at home. They may even harm the work, by their relative wealth, their circulating primarily within the English-speak-

ing community, their cross-cultural complaining, their poor language ability and their lack of adaptability.

Come Well Prepared

Professional, you too are needed in the work throughout the world. However, come prepared in Bible knowledge, church experience, language skills, cultural understanding and knowledge of mission principles, just as if you were coming for fulltime church service. In this way you can become a real asset on the field, rather than a liability.

Prefer Fulltime Service?

On the other hand, are you interested in fulltime missionary service? If so, frequent the missions workshops and seminars held all over the nation. These include mission seminars and workshops, which rotate from college to college, and any number of special programs on missions. Let elders and missionaries present know of your preparation and interest.

Arrange to have your story placed in church papers, presenting in a clear, concise way your plans and qualifications.

Participate in lecture series and evangelistic campaigns in foreign countries. Mission-minded elders and other church leaders attend such events and you will make valuable contacts among them.

Visit congregations known to have a growing interest in missions, and especially in your particular part of the world. Along with this, have a serious talk about your goal with the elders of your own congregation.

Perhaps you are qualified for a specialized field of fulltime service, such as printing, journalism, linguistics, teaching English, flying and many others. Again, your unique qualifications need to be made known through the various channels listed above. If you are qualified in linguistics, you may wish to contact Wycliffe Bible Translators, Box 1960, Santa Ana, California. If your background is in any aspect of radio or television, talk with churches which are specializing in national and international mass communications.

What Kind of Opportunity Fits My Preparation?

Without some guidance in the matter, you could find yourself a square Christian peg in a round, foreign hole. How do you go about receiving such guidance? There are some excellent testing devices through which you can narrow down your choice of vocational fields and geographical areas. Vocational aptitude tests include the Kudor Vocational Preference Test, the Strong Vocational Interest Test and the Guilford-Zimmerman Aptitude. Test. These and othes like them can be administered by any number of counselling agencies. Also, Christian colleges and universitites offering missions programs are equipped to test and counsel on missionary placement.

Where to Explore?

A person may fit like a foot in an old shoe in one country and be miserably misplaced in another. It is wise to investigate the areas of your particular interest against your background and your likes and dislikes. Without such examination, you may find yourself as confused about your choice as the young would-be missionary who was for "going to Tibet, but may decide on the Congo or Inner City, instead".

When To Take The Steps?

Someone has observed, *"The future belongs to those who are now continually planning for it"*. God uses planning. Remember, real guidance and real facts and real planning do mix.[117]

Have good reasons for your decisions, and let those reasons be based on facts. Facts are available by the thousands in today's society, but they must be brought together in a planned pattern. Start now collecting information and organizing it, if you really want to serve the Lord overseas in the future.

And, above all, pray continually about your hopes and plans. Many can testify that after they had turned their plans over to the Lord, they then jumped back and watched those plans take shape in an awesome way. You can count on the Lord to keep ahead of you in this matter ... if He is willing for you to go and you are really willing to go. A sincere "Here am I, send me!" will gain God's support in your campaign to find your niche in vocational or fulltime missionary service.

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117 *Overseas Opportunities.* See footnote 95

CHAPTER 25
CHURCHES, BE SET APART FOR MISSIONS

The mission of the New Testament Church is missions. For this end she was initiated and for this purpose she was left here in the world. As a plane must fly, to be a plane, so the church, to be the Church, must evangelize. Her frontline troops are to fan out into the world, to take out of it "a people for his name" (Acts 15:14), a people redeemed by His blood out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation (Rev. 5:9). Philip Slate states emphatically, on the role of the church in missionary evangelism:

> Evangelism is the church's life-blood. In the new era the church comes into being by the Gospel. It is ideally composed of people "from every tribe and tongue and people and nation," who exist to praise God, who have accepted and live under the Gospel ... A part of its life-blood is to proclaim to others that which it has come to enjoy ... This evangelizing (gospel-izing) is to be a characteristic feature of Jesus' people "to the close of the age".[118]

Local Church The Key

Rather than being the rusty hinge to the door or world evangelism, the local church must be the key. Within her fellowship is the smouldering flame necessary to igniting the world. Within her collective pockets are the financial resources; within her heart, God's powerful, moving Spirit. Finally, within her membership is the manpower for the world-encompassing task before us.

Our Real Goal

Our goal must be total education, motivation, recruitment,

118C. Philip Slate, "The Biblical Imperative", *Guidelines For World Evangelism*, pp. 22–23

preparation and going. We must grow to the point of united commitment to missions; that is, of a cohesive effort, to accomplish this task. A. R. Tippett describes the cohesion existing among Christians of the Batak tribe in Indonesia:

> Where you find a Batak Christian, there is a man who talks about his faith, where there are two, there is a prayer meeting, where there are three you find a church ...[119]

Our Lord could have devised other means to communicate His message, but instead, He chose to place His treasure in earthen vessels, that is, in Christians grouped in local congregations (II Cor. 4:7). Think of the confidence He demonstrates in the local church, to accomplish His worldwide task, without any superimposed mission boards or hierarchical structure.

Jesus' Call To The Local Church

We dare not fail in our task, nor dare we abdicate it to colleges, seminars or boards. The Holy Spirit went directly to Antioch and issued His orders to that particular local church: "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul ..." So today He goes to local churches everywhre, expecting them to measure up to the task to which He calls them.

To meet our age-long, world encompassing challenge, we must launch a serious, continuous educational and motivational program in our own congregation, as we prepare to set apart our own Sauls and Barnabas's to the work.

Of course, our education and motivation must be true and noble; our preparation, thorough and our going and sending wholehearted. This call is for eternity and demands the best that is in each of us. It is a call for maturity in missions, at the grassroots level. Ranck puts it this way:

> Here is no speciality for the Christian with time to spare or with a penchant for missions. This call to growth in mis-

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[119] A.R. Tippett, "Ethnic Cohesion", *Readings in Missionary Anthropology*, p. 29

sion is for every Christian, so he may move constantly toward " ... the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ..." (Eph. 4:13)[120]

You elders, evangelists, ministers, deacons and mission committee chairmen are important keys to success in educating and motivating your congregations toward missions at a fullscale level. Use teaching and preaching opportunities. Stir up the young people and send them out on local, national and international short-term mission projects. Travel to the different fields you support and to others, as well. Permit God's fire of mission zeal to consume you. You are the shepherds and the local flock will go, in great part, where you lead it. Remember, always, that the church will probably do no more in missions than you plan for her to do. Are you leading the way to total missions involvement? Are you providing information, motivation, preparation and opportunities for going and sharing worldwide?

On the eve of Israel's crossing of the Jordan and launching of her first attack against an enemy stronghold, General Joshua was fearful. Even though he had large numbers at his disposal, his army was composed of citizen-solidiers, volunteers, if you please, who were largely untrained in the skills of war. They faced walled cities and professional armies. Joshua needed encouragement. That very day the Lord strengthened his servant, telling him:

> Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:9 RSV).

Ours is the same fortifying Lord, today. He has told us not to fear, for He will be with us in our holy task (John 14:27, Mat. 28:20). Let us then respond to Him in faith, as we set apart our own local churches for the work to which He has called us.

120J. Allen Ranck, *op.cit.*, p. 154

Remember, always, leaders and members of local churches, that we have the greatest of all tasks. As Ladd puts it so well:

> So long as light is light, it must shine; and so long as salt is salt, it must preserve. Thus the mission of the church is not only that of employing the keys of the Kingdom to open to both Jew and Gentile the door into the eternal life which is the gift of God's Kingdom; it is also the instrument of God's dynamic rule in the world to oppose evil and the powers of Satan in every form of their manifestation. When God's people lose sight of this fact, we betray our character as the church ... God has entrusted to people like us, redeemed sinners, the responsibility of carrying out the divine purpose in history ... God has entrusted to us this mission; and unless we do it, it will not get done ...
>
> This Good News of the Kingdom of God must be preached ... by the Church in all the world for a witness to all nations. This is God's programme. This means that for the ultimate meaning of modern civilization and the destiny of human history, you and I are more important than the United Nations ... because it is in the accomplishment of this mission that the divine purpose for human history is accomplished. No less than this is our mission.[121]

Here we have, then, the real purpose for history and for the Church. Here is the thread of meaning, woven into the mission of God's people, as Ladd notes.[122] Dayton and Fraser correctly affirm:

> 1. Mission has its source in the triune God. The mission of the Church is the mission of God.
>
> 2. Only if the Church is understood as missionary, is it understood at all. The intrinsic nature of the Church is missionary because it is sent out by God.[123]

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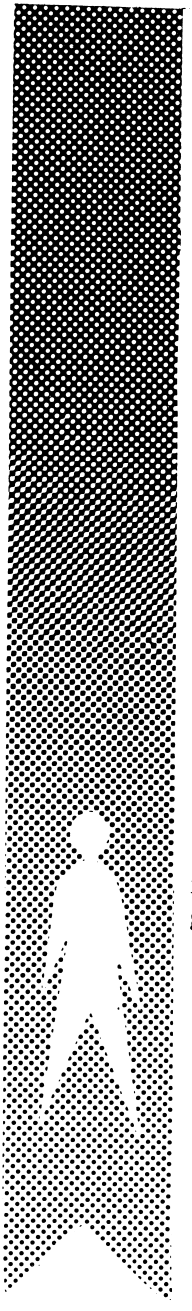
[121] George Eldon Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, pp. 120–121, 134–135

[122] *op.cit.*, p. 133

[123] Edward R. Dayton, David A. Fraser, *Planning Strategies for World Evangelism*, p. 53

We, in our local churches, are indispensable "earthen vessels" (II Cor. 4:7), to transmit His treasure to man and in so doing, to help in a small way to hasten our King's return.

How well are we applying this treasure? How much are we setting apart our own members to our heaven-ordained task? In a sense we cannot close this book, because only you and the other brothers in your local congregation can answer these questions. How you answer them has implications for the entire future of the church and of the world, as well as for the whole of eternity.



Part VII
MEASURING THE CHURCH'S GROWTH IN MISSION AWARENESS

"... We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Ephesians 4:15 RSV).

"Now as you excel in everything – in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in your love for us – see that you excel in this gracious work also" (II Corinthians 8:7 RSV).

CHAPTER 26
MEASURING YOUR CONGREGATION'S MISSION EMPHASIS

Following is a sample checklist for elders, deacons, ministers and mission committees to follow, in measuring the level of mission education, motivation and preparation in the local church:[124]

1. ..... Our curriculum for the year's Bible study, at all levels, includes a unit on education for missions.
2. ..... Bible teachers are provided with workshops, seminars, research information and other resource materials on missions.
3. ..... The church library has a sizeable section on missions, with this section constantly augmented by new titles.
4. ..... A mission workshop, or a special course on missions, has been scheduled on the year's calendar.
5. ..... We have a challenging mission program, locally, nationally and internationally.
6. ..... At least one of the families supported by our congregation has been scheduled for a visit with us during the year.
7. ..... While here, this family will be given special opportunities to report, to teach the entire congregation, to circulate among the classes and to participate in our annual workshop.
8. ..... We have arranged a large bulletin board exclusively for missions and maintain interesting, informative displays, rotated frequently.

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124 Adapted from J. Allen Ranck, *op.cit.*, p. 141. See also "How Missions-Minded Is Your Church?" *ACMC Questionnaire*, 1620 S. Myrtle Ave., Monrovia, California 91016

9. ..... We have scheduled evangelist campaigns this year at home, in some other state and in some foreign country.
10. ..... We are encouraging our members to visit our missionaries and have our elders scheduled for trips to the field, on a rotating basis.
11. ..... We are preparing specific members of our own congregation for future world evangelism.
12. ..... Our mission budget is one of the major expenditures of the year.
13. ..... We are increasing our missionary program each year, sending out more families and participating in more opportunities in other areas than ever before.
14. ..... We have concrete plans to initiate a new congregation in some nearby area, both because of the opportunity there and as a channel of mission experience for our members.
15. ..... We are sending our elders and ministers to formal mission seminars, at Christian colleges and/or preacher training schools, to better prepare them for leadership in this area.
16. ..... We have a dynamic mission committee, which handles the considerable amount of research and correspondence necessary for our program.

Can You Say "Yes"?

If you can honestly answer "yes" to all of these questions, you are not far from the Kingdom, at least in the area of fulfilling your mission as a congregation. Other types of checklist can be worked out, to test the missionary I.Q. of the membership, both as to general attitudes toward missions and as to specific understanding of mission work. A most revealing questionaire could deal with the church's level of knowledge about the work and workers in areas in which the congregation is specifically involved. Following is a sample questionnaire which can be adapted to your own specific situation:

1. The Great Commision is found in what books of the Bible? .....
2. Who was the outstanding apostle to the Gentiles? .....

3. The church exists primarily to fulfill what function? .....
4. Should every congregation be vitally concerned for and involved in some missionary outreach? .....
5. Can a member of the church who is not interested in the mission of the church be a good member? .....
6. For every dollar the average church spends on herself, her contributions for missions represent what percentage, 10%, 20%,30%, 50%? .....
7. The Bible is now published, all or in part, in how many different languages? .....
8. The lands, other than our own, where our congregation is doing mission work regularly, are .....
9. In our own country we are involved in missionary outreach in .....
10. Our congregation gives about how much per year to support missions in other countries? ..... This represents ..... percent of the budget.
11. The missionaries (and their countries) we as a congregation presently support are .....
12. Our congregation has been involved in foreign missions for about how many years? .....
13. The missionary books and magazines I have read during the last year include .....
14. I would rate our church participation in missionary outreach, beyond our own city, as (excellent, good, fair, poor).
15. The chief qualification for a present-day missionary should be (academic training, specialized skills, a deep faith, a passion for Christian service, a knowledge of the language and culture, ability to work with those of other races and cultures) .....
16. The chief obstacle to missionary work at the present time is (a shortage of prepared workers, materialism, religious division, the rise of non-Christian and semi-Christian philosophies) .....
17. The wisest strategy for successful mission work on the field is to (preach the Gospel, meet the physical and social needs of the people, reach the youth, thoroughly educate a few leaders, build self-supporting and self-propagating churches) .....
18. The best way for our congregation to expand her mission effort is to .....

19. I would rate communication from our elders, ministers and teachers about our missionary program and the world outreach opportunities before us as (excellent, good, fair, poor).
20. My own part in the mission program of the church is to (contribute money, participate on the mission committee, read about missions and mission methods, participate in campaigns, travel abroad, prepare for future service on some mission field).[125]

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[125] Adapted from: Nevin C. Harner and Daivd D. Baker, *Missionary Education In Your Church*, p. 163. This sample should be adapted, where necessary, to your own local situation. Tests of this sort should be given before a training program or workshop on missions, carefully evaluated and then given again after the training period, to evaluate congregational growth in mission awareness

Appendix

After completing this manuscript, three excellent items on missionary motivation were encountered. The first is by J. Randal Matheny, a young missionary-in-training who plans to serve with us here in Brazil, beginning in 1984. Following is a statement of his reasons for wishing to serve as a missionary:

> Why do I want to be a foreign missionary? If you have a minute, let me tell you on behalf of the whole team, why I am going. Since we share the same motives and reasons, when I tell you why I am planning to go you will know by extension why every team member is committed to this same goal.

First, I am preparing to work for the Lord abroad because of the great need which exists. Approximately 95% of all the gospel preachers in the world minister to 5% of the world's population here in the United States. The remaining 5% of preachers is striving to reach the other 95% of the world's population. Outside the United States churches of Christ have less than 600 fully-supported missionary families serving 4 billion people. While there are over 13,000 churches in the U.S.A., there are less than 4,000 in the rest of the world. While the United States has churches in every state, 65 nations of the world have never been given the opportunity to hear the true gospel. Of those 130 countries where the truth of Christ has entered, only the surface has been scratched. Only 5 % of Africa, 3% of Latin America, and 1% of Asia have received any Christian teaching. If you saw ten men carrying a log, nine on one end and one of the other, and you wanted to help, to which end would you go? I want to help the fewest people carrying the greatest load.

Second, I plan to work in a foreign country because I am able. Not everybody can be a missionary. I can. God has given me the talents to learn a foreign language and to adjust to a different culture. He expects me to use the capabilities which he has intrusted to me ...

Third, I intend to preach overseas because Matthew 28:18–20 applies to me. While some may fulfill the Great Commission by staying home and giving moral, spiritual and financial support, I fulfill it by being one of those who go. This is my part in the Lord's mission for the church.

Fourth, I will be a missionary abroad because I love the Lord. I want to put forth my very best effort. I want to be where the Lord can utilize my talents to the greatest possible results. He has a place for me where I will serve his purpose best, where I will bring him the greatest glory, where I will minister to his cause in the most excellent and effective way. That place is one of a missionary.[126]

The second is by John Bright, Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament at Union Theological Seminary, in Richmond, Virginia. It deals with the Suffering Servant theme of Isaiah 42, 49, 50 and 52:15–53:12, and its implications for missions.

The Servant announces that he has been elected of old for a purpose and kept in reserve till the fullness of time (49:1–2) ... and just at that moment when it seems to him that all of his labor has been in vain (49:4), there is revealed to him the full sweep of his mission: Not only to call Israel back to its destiny under God, but also to proclaim the true faith to the entire world ...

But here is the most important point: However the Servant is pictured, even conceived as the coming Redeemer, the Servant mission is always laid before Israel as her calling and destiny ... Israel is to be the people of the Servant; only so will she be the people of God. As the Servant, prophetlike, proclaims the righteousness of God to the world, so must Israel; as the Servant, priestlike, mediates the salvation of God to men through his suffering, so must Israel. As the Servant gains a victory and a Kingdom through his sacrifice, so must Israel know no other royal path. Israel is to follow the Servant, take up the cross of the Servant, share in the Servant's

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[126]From the brochure, *Behold Brazil*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1981

redemptive mission ... She is to take the road of missionary suffering in the footsteps of the Servant – for this alone is the pathway of the Kingdom ...

For as members of the Church of Christ our calling is that Servant calling. How seriously do we take it? Do we understand it at all? ... let us, then be reminded that the task of the Church is not and cannot be other than the Servant's task.[127]

A PLAN FOR MISSION EDUCATION AND ACTION ON THE LOCAL LEVEL[128]

1. Set aside one hour a week, whether during Sunday school, Sunday evening, or the midweek prayer service, for systematic, step-by-step study, discussion and prayer (concerning cross-cultural missions and evangelism).
2. Describe ... in Biblical terms what the Church is designed to be and to do in the plan of God.
3. Gradually piece together a picture of the life and program of the local church, showing how each part contributes to the basic purposes for the church's existence.
4. Evaluate and modify the existing program in terms of its conformity to the Biblical pattern and actual results.
5. Practice prayer for and participation in the various programs of the church in accordance with the plan and resources God has provided.
6. Promote mission-evangelistic outreach in other communities at home and abroad in accordance with the understanding gained from this study.

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[127]John Bright, *The Kingdom of God*, pp. 147–155. (This entire section of his book is rich in material that shows the close parallel between Israel's real purpose as a servant and the Church's real purpose as the servant of God's eternal Suffering Servant, Jesus Christ.)

[128]David J. Hesselgrave. *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: A Guide for Home and Foreign Missions*, pp. 71–72. See also entire chapter on Education For Missions, pp. 65–80.

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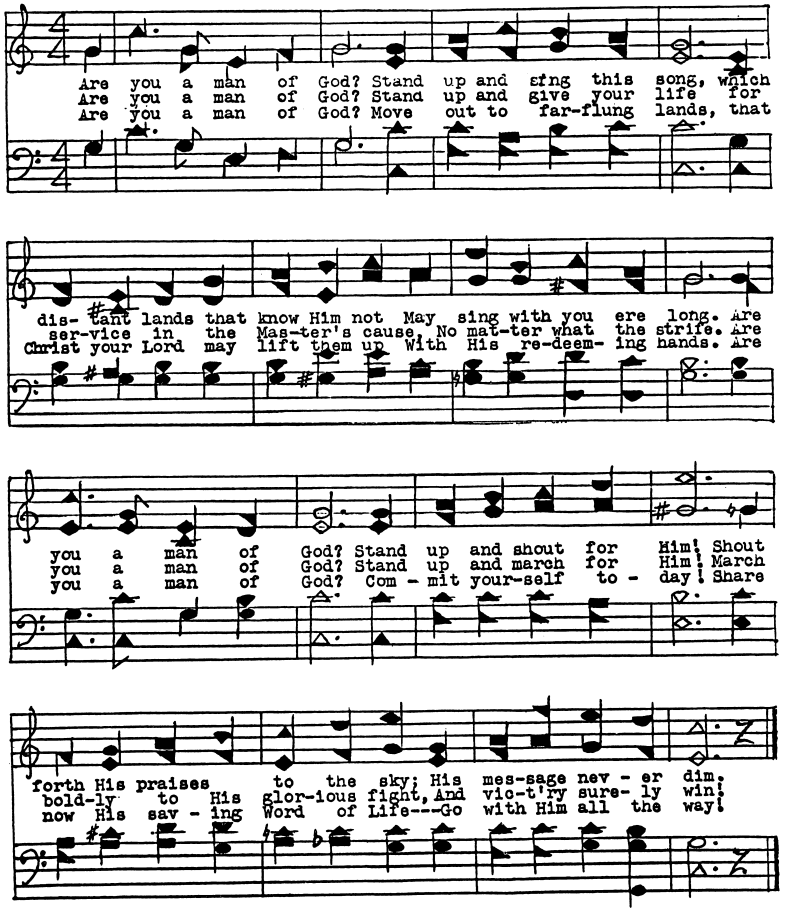
Soul-Saving and Missionary Songs

The following are missionary songs that I have written (or shared in writing) over the years. They are included here in the hope that they may encourage greater interest, at the level of the local church, in our mission, both at home and abroad.

Are You A Man Of God?

Glover H. Shipp — Frank E. Roberts


Are you a man of God? Stand up and sing this song, watch
Are you a man of God? Stand up and give your life for
Are you a man of God? Move out to far-flung lands, that
dis- tant lands that know Him not May sing with you ere long. Are
ser-vice in the Mas-ter's cause, No mat-ter what the strife. Are
Christ your Lord may lift them up With His re-deem- ing hands. Are
you a man of God? Stand up and shout for Him! Shout
you a man of God? Stand up and march for Him! March
you a man of God? Com - mit your-self to - day! Share
forth His praises to the sky; His mes-sage nev - er dim.
bold-ly to His glor-ious fight, And vic-t'ry sure- ly win!
now His sav - ing Word of Life---Go with Him all the way!

Go With God

Glover H. Shipp

1. With-out God your go-ing is in vain; With-out God, what can you
2. If you go to lands be-yond the sea; If you go, how will your
3. Go with God to those of ev-'ry land; Go with God o'er hills and
hope to gain? But if you walk with Him a-long the road,
go-ing be? No need to fear the storms a-long the way;
des-ert sand. He said to go — then why not trust His word?
Refrain:
He'll be with you and help you with your load. Go with God,
He prom-ised, "I'll be with you ev-'ry day." Go with God,
Go with your God, for He's your go-ing Lord.
Go with God, Go with God, Go with God in His pow'r to-day; Go with
God, Go with God, Go with God, Go with God, Go in God's own way.